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FIRST UK REVIEW

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- New Mario Kart tips!
- Baten Kaitos
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- Astro Boy and more



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Welcome to NOM UK



**Want to see
the first-ever
drawings of
Mario? What
about DK?
Never thought
it possible?**

Well actually it is. Right here in this very issue in fact, the first-ever pictures of Donkey Kong and Mario penned by the Nintendo generation's Walt Disney, the man they call the Spielberg of games.

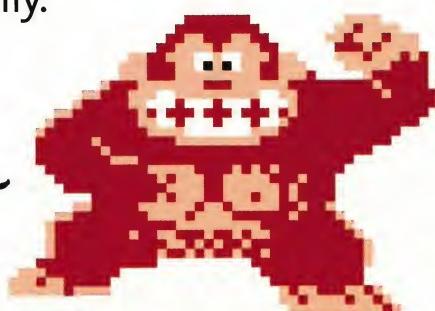
These drawings are like your very own passport inside Miyamoto's head, your day pass to the studios of Nintendo Japan. The original sketches have been untouched for over 20 years and you'll only get to see them in this mag.

Seeing the early ideas for such classic stars is a Nintendo fan's dream come true. No-one else has Mario, no-one else has DK or Link. They are Nintendo's and Nintendo's only.

Enjoy the mag!

Tim Street

Tim Street, Editor



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(and the game they are desperate to play in 2004)

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Calls cost 50p per minute. Calls last two minutes. Text entries cost £1.00 per entry. Please get permission from the bill payer before calling. *Nintendo Official Magazine UK* and the companies providing prizes accept no liability for injuries or damage sustained while using prizes.

All entries for the competitions in *NOM UK* 137 must be received by 12/2/04 to qualify. The winner will receive the stated prize from the competition they have entered. If, for any reason beyond the promoter's control, it is not possible to provide the stated prize, the promoter reserves the right to award an alternative prize of no lesser value.

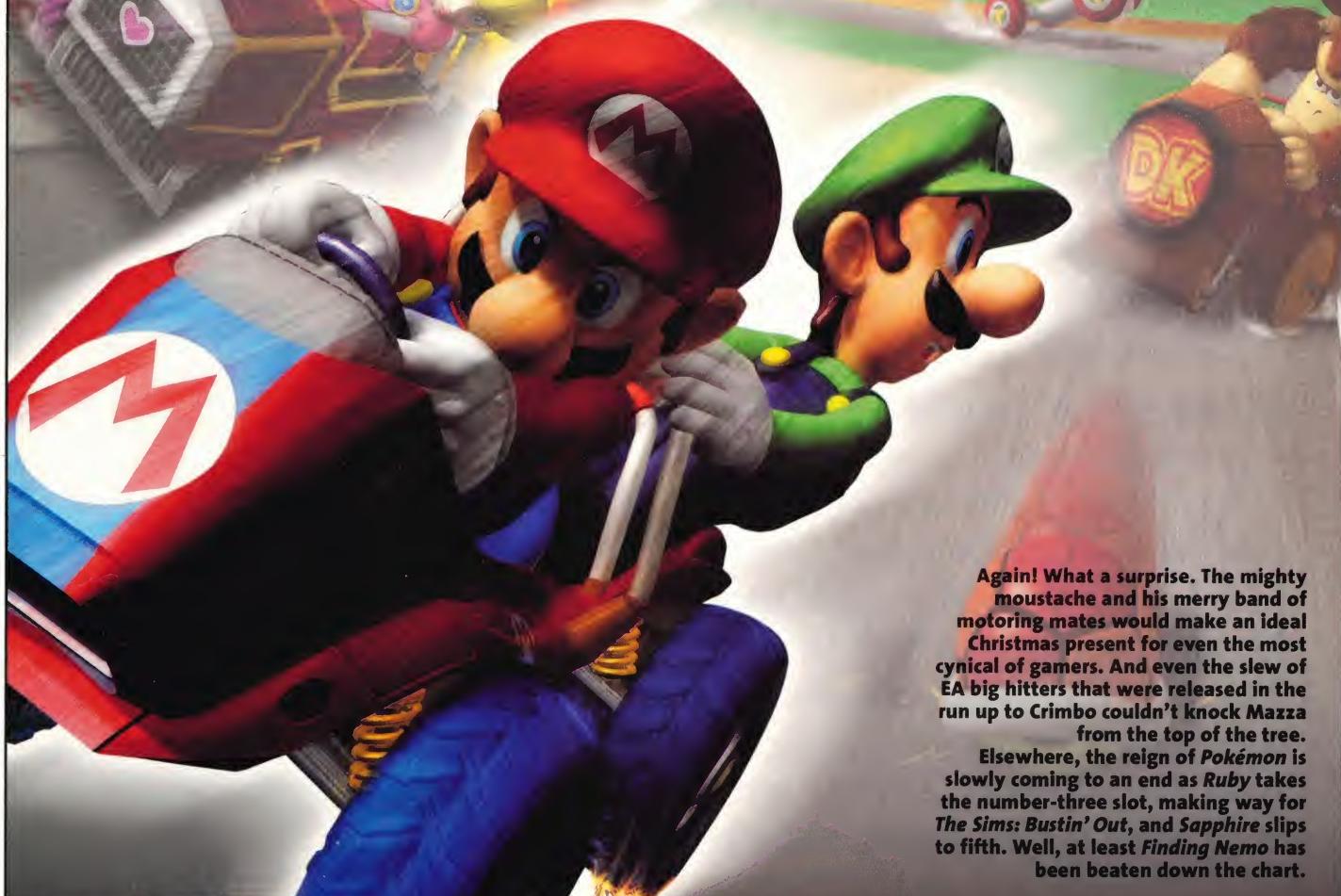
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ANSWERS TO THE ROCK-HARD QUIZ, p27

- (1) Super Mario Bros., NES; (6) Tetris, Game Boy; (17) Super Terms; (2) Super Mario Bros.; (3) Paper Mario; (4) Super Mario Kart; (5) Super Mario Bros.; (7) International Soccer League; (8) Super Racing; (9) Zeldite; (10) Super Mario Bros.; (11) Super Mario Bros.; (12) Super Mario Bros.; (13) Super Mario Bros.; (14) Super Mario Bros.; (15) Super Mario Bros.; (16) Super Mario Bros.; (17) Super Mario Bros.; (18) Super Mario Bros.; (19) Super Mario Bros.; (20) Super Mario Bros.; (21) Super Mario Bros.; (22) Super Mario Bros.; (23) Super Mario Bros.; (24) Super Mario Bros.; (25) Super Mario Bros.; (26) Super Mario Bros.; (27) Super Mario Bros.; (28) Super Mario Bros.; (29) Super Mario Bros.; (30) Super Mario Bros.; (31) Super Mario Bros.; (32) Super Mario Bros.; (33) Super Mario Bros.; (34) Super Mario Bros.; (35) Super Mario Bros.; (36) Super Mario Bros.; (37) Super Mario Bros.; (38) Super Mario Bros.; (39) Super Mario Bros.; (40) Super Mario Bros.; (41) Super Mario Bros.; (42) Super Mario Bros.; 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YOU'VE MOSTLY BEEN BUYING...

MARIO KART™ Double Dash™



Again! What a surprise. The mighty moustache and his merry band of motoring mates would make an ideal Christmas present for even the most cynical of gamers. And even the slew of EA big hitters that were released in the run up to Crimbo couldn't knock Mazza from the top of the tree.

Elsewhere, the reign of Pokémon is slowly coming to an end as Ruby takes the number-three slot, making way for The Sims: Bustin' Out, and Sapphire slips to fifth. Well, at least Finding Nemo has been beaten down the chart.

GAMECUBE SALES CHART

This month's GC chart has that distinctive EA Christmas flavour, but the top slots are filled by two exclusive titles.

TITLE	PUBLISHER
1 Mario Kart: Double Dash	Nintendo
2 Star Wars: Rebel Strike	Activision
3 The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Vivendi
4 Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg	Sega
5 LOTR: The Return of the King	EA
6 The Sims: Bustin' Out	EA
7 Mario Party 5	Nintendo
8 Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA
9 Tony Hawk's Underground	Activision
10 Need for Speed: Underground	EA

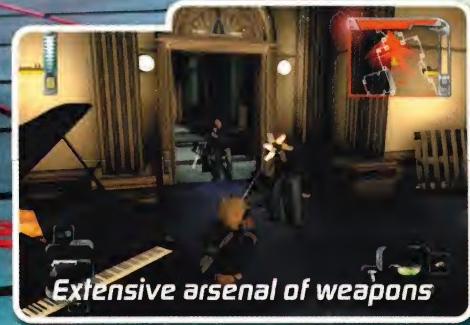


GAME BOY ADVANCE SALES CHART

Pokémon's hold seems to be slipping with The Sims hitting the top and Sapphire falling away from Ruby.

TITLE	PUBLISHER
1 The Sims: Bustin' Out	EA
2 LOTR: The Return of the King	EA
3 Pokémon Ruby	Nintendo
4 Super Mario Advance 4	Nintendo
5 Pokémon Sapphire	Nintendo
6 Spyro: Attack of the Rhinos	Vivendi
7 Finding Nemo	THQ
8 Crash Nitro Kart	Vivendi
9 Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga	Nintendo
10 FIFA 2004	EA

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p068. Sonic Heroes



p032. Big in Japan



p062. Game soundtracks



p017, p023, p024, p026, p110. Win loads of cool stuff!

p028. Miyamoto interview



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- You've Mostly Been Buying _____
- What We Know _____
- Feedback Team _____
- Hardware _____
- Nintendo Know-it-all _____
- The *NOM* survey _____
- The ROCK-HARD Quiz _____
- Big in Japan _____
- Celebrate Nintendo _____
- GameCube reader reviews _____
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- Masterclass _____
- The Great Nintendo Challenge _____
- We Can't Wait For These... _____

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Tested

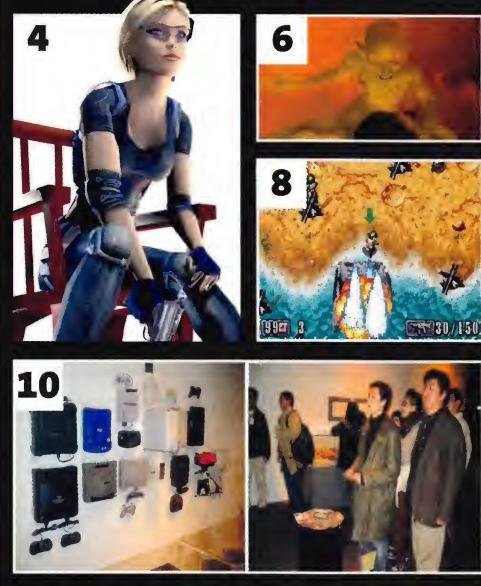
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles

008



10 Things we didn't know last month...

1. We'd get short-changed by a monkey (*Donkey Konga*, p044)
2. Cel-shaded letters could be sorted at the speed of light (*The Great Nintendo Challenge*, p098)
3. We could fit every SSBM trophy on two pages and still have room for some words (*Celebrate Nintendo*, p40)
4. Vanessa Schneider's best-body-in-games crown could be under threat (*Rogue Ops*, p076)
5. He STILL won't tell us about *Mario 128* (Miyamoto interview, p28)
6. Middle-Earth's bad boys are all mouth and no trousers (*Lord of the Rings*, Masterclass, p88)
7. Bleep bleep bleep is the way forward (*Game Soundtracks*, 062)
8. Less is more (*Medal of Honor: Infiltrator*, p078)
9. There still isn't a law against this sort of thing (*Hot Wheels World Race*, p85)
10. Museums can actually be interesting... in Japan (*Big in Japan*, p032)



Reviews

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Hot Wheels World Race	p085
Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion	p084
Looney Tunes	p080
Medal of Honor: Infiltrator	p078
Mission Impossible: Operation Surma	p085
NFL Street	p082
Rogue Ops	p076
The Sims: Bustin' Out	p081
Sonic Heroes	p068
SpongeBob Squarepants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	p084
SSX 3	p085
Terminator 3	p084







Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles

Game info

Price: £39.99
Publisher: Nintendo
Web: www.nintendo.co.uk
Players: 1-4
Memory: 22 blocks

Out
Mar 11th

An epic journey of swords, sorcery and skulduggery awaits, but you don't need to be a geeky stat-head to enjoy it. What you MIGHT need is three or four game-loving mates with GBAs – then you'll be off.

> This is like no other *Final Fantasy* game you've ever played. If you're hoping *Crystal Chronicles* has a squillion character stats, a complex story that no-one can fathom, or a thousand characters that speak utter gibberish, you won't find it here. But, if you want a journey of intrigue and exploration across beautiful landscapes, or dark and gloomy caves full of nasty beings to slaughter, this is your game. The relationship between Nintendo and Square may have been a bit sour in past years, but now the RPG kings are back.

Crystal Chronicles will be hitting these shores in March. Blimey, that's soon. Excited? To be honest, I wasn't that interested when *FFCC* reached NOM UK locked in a special GameCube like some top-secret disc from a *Mission Impossible* movie. *Zelda* is as close to RPGs as I usually get (although that's not a proper one). In fact, *Ocarina of Time* is my second-favourite game ever (behind *Super Mario*

64, of course). The mere thought of levelling-up and reams of text bores me to tears. But this is not a typical RPG.

Unlike any RPG we've played before, this has been specifically designed for multiplayer gaming. It's all about teamwork and co-operation, and you'll need to work together to survive, to battle and even to get around. This doesn't mean it can't be played on your own, but if you're a lone gamer you'll have to compromise. If you've got three GBA-owning mates, however, *Crystal Chronicles* will be a unique experience.

Surprised? We were too, especially when we realised how basic the plot is. A toxic mist called *Miasma* covers every part of the land. If anyone breathes it in they'll snuff it, so the townsfolk use a special Protection Crystal that repels the mist, creating a purified zone around it. To maintain their power, the crystals must be doused in special water called *Myrrh* that comes from a rare type of tree.

"Get a party of fighters round and you'll have a blast like no other."



Boats used to look like this. That's why they were slow and rubbish

**Tested****First. Official. Best.**

Take a left past the

The variation of worlds in *Crystal Chronicles* is something to be

Marrs Pass

This small but bustling town will be your first port of call for new equipment. There are two blacksmiths that'll knock together some sweet blades if you've got the metal and cash. We also met a dodgy old bloke who says he likes to stand and stare at young girls all day. Look out for him ladies. The dirty old git.



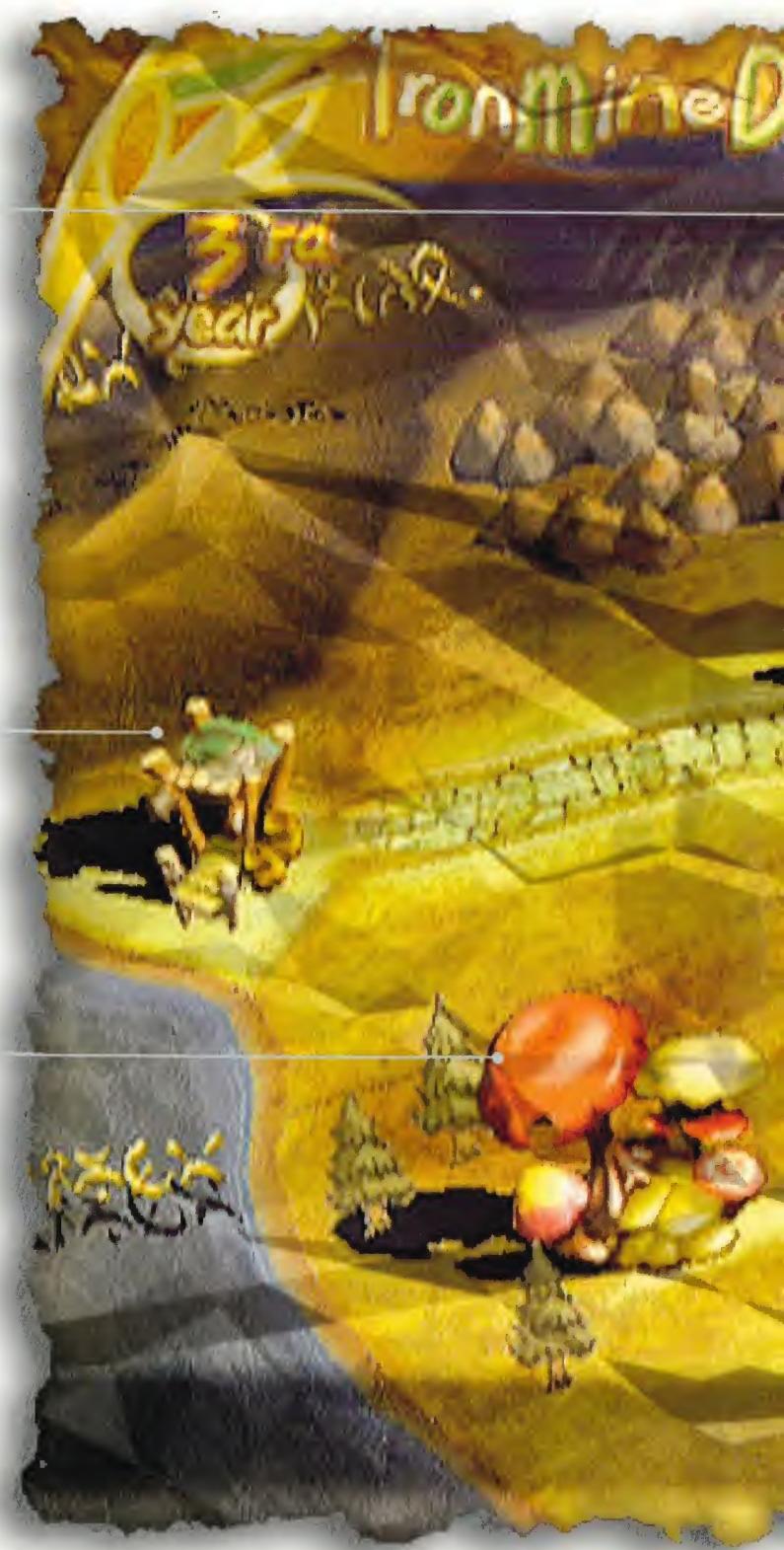
Jegon River

You won't find much here other than a moody chap who refuses to let anyone go near his boat. Return later and he'll change his mind, if you slip him a hefty wager that is. Forget him though, we just liked strolling through this gorgeous area. Sparkling river water and a lovely cottage with smoke coming out of the chimney. It's so lovely.



The Mushroom Forest

The mushrooms here aren't covered in white spots and you can't eat them to make you bigger, but there are certainly a lot of them and they form a huge maze of paths, patrolled by some pretty mean creatures. It's by this point that you'll have needed to sort out your fighting tactics if you don't want to get smashed up.



mushroom flyover?!

seen. Just one map area contains forests, caves, mines and villages.



The Mine of Cathuridges

To get through this stage, you've got to smack a mine cart along the rails, crushing any blockages in your way and switching the points as you go to take the correct path. No worries, until your skull has a close encounter with the hefty blade of some troll's heavy axe. Then you'll worry.



**Tested****First. Official. Best.**

Back in the day

The origins of an epic franchise...

FF Crystal Chronicles is actually the **SEVENTH** *Final Fantasy* game to appear on a Nintendo home console. Did you know that? It all began way back in 1987...



Final Fantasy first stunned RPG-heads in 1987 on the classic NES, stealing the crown from the awesome *Dragon Quest*. Ergh... dirty graphics.



Released in 1988, *Final Fantasy II* never saw the light of day outside Japan. Further proof that us lot live in the wrong country. Oh, the pain.



In the same year, *FFIII* hit Japanese stores... and nowhere else. Gamers went on a quest to bring balance between light and dark.



Westerners eventually got their share of the goods when *FFIV* arrived on the Super NES in 1991. It was called *Final Fantasy II* in Euroland.



This has got to be the daddy. *FFV* hit Japan in 1992 and is said to be one of the best RPGs on the Super NES. And that's saying something, dudes.



1994's *FFVI* (*FFIII* in the UK) contained suicide and teenage pregnancy, a bit like *EastEnders*. But, we were busy with *Mario World*.

Every year, caravan crews from each of the towns set out to gather Myrrh and bring it back to use on their Crystal. That is basically what you've got to do – defeat the beasts that guard the ultra-rare trees, gather the Myrrh and bring it back. That's it. No world-threatening disaster, no almighty evil villain, no superhero stuff. Just a bunch of weird looking dudes in a rickety caravan gathering water. This is not what we'd expect from a *Final Fantasy* title, but more from a bunch of hippies on their way to Glastonbury.

Once you've chosen your character, given them a name and picked a family trade, you leave your home town of Tipa. You travel from place to place using a map screen that works in a similar way to classic Mario games like *Super Mario World*. Move the caravan to the place you

want to visit, hit A and you're in.

There are two main types of area: towns and battle stages. The towns are peaceful places, with quaint little village houses set on beautiful green landscapes with bubbling streams and little waterfalls. Visiting them is a very tranquil experience. You'll be whistling away to the relaxing background melody as you pop in at the blacksmith's to buy equipment for upgrading your characters, or have a chat with the locals.

The real adventuring is to be found in the battle stages. Each level begins with a flypast and a soothing female voice-over telling you a story about the land you're entering. It's typical fairy-tale stuff, but it sets the scene nicely.

Now outside the safety barrier of a town's Protection Crystal, players need to

“It’s a journey of



This guy won't let you on his boat, but in typical RPG style you can't fireball his ass until he reconsiders



carry around a Crystal Chalice that forms a miniature barrier, keeping them safe from the Miasma. This is where teamwork comes in, because the player who carries the Chalice is unable to fight or defend. The others will have to protect that player from being attacked by nearby enemies and the carrier needs to make sure they stay out of harm's way while keeping everyone else shielded from the Miasma.

In single-player mode, you'll be followed around by a little fury Moogle, that'll carry the Chalice for you while you fight and explore. Sometimes he gets tired and you'll have to wait for him. What's more his basic A.I. can cause him to get stuck on scenery as he struggles to keep up.

Carrying the Chalice is all he'll do, he won't help fight enemies or revive you if you die. He'll just sit and watch while you do all the

work, or get your face battered, the lazy runt. Oi Moogles, CAST A BLOODY SPELL! Headbutt someone. DO SOMETHING before I fire-spell your fur off and roast you like a turkey. How d'ya like that?! But you can't hurt the blasted thing – it's invincible.

Some enemies won't be beaten with sword strikes alone – you'll need magic. If you're playing on your own, you can only combine two spells at once; like two Fire spells to make Fira. But if you've got a couple of mates playing, all three of you can combine your Fire magic to make a super Firaga spell, which'll burn a second hole in the ass of even the toughest enemy.

The spells are cool, but the fighting system isn't all roses, as it seems that even with four players, battles are a random melee, where you use the same repetitive slice-and-run moves against every single foe, including

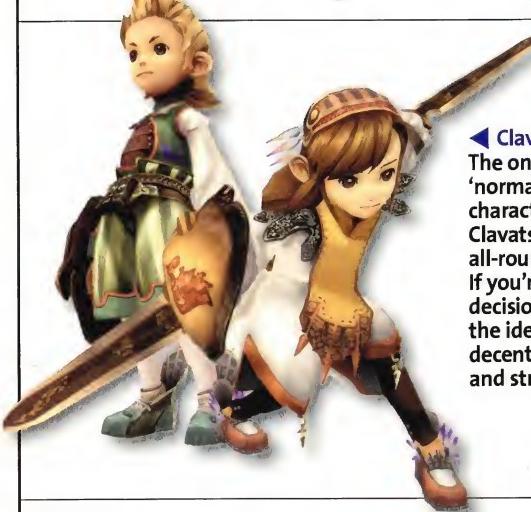


Misunderstood – all this boss plant wants is a quiet life of photosynthesis. Slap it anyway

intrigue and exploration.”

Choose your player

There's no star in FFCC. The different caravan crews of Tipa each boast their own strengths, so you need to strike a balance in your team.



Clavats

The only slightly 'normal' looking characters in the game, Clavats are pretty good all-round adventurers. If you're not good with decisions, Clavats are the ideal choice, with decent attack, defence and strong magic skills.

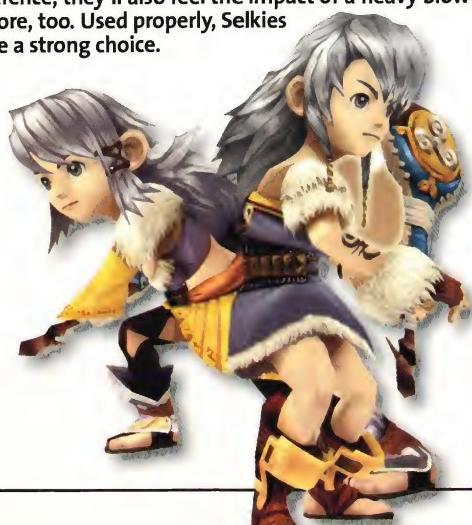
Lilts

These fellas are like angry little Jack Russells. But bark them off and they'll do more than nip at your ankles. They aren't that great at magic, but their attack and defence more than make up for it. Best when it comes to no-messing blows.



Selkies

These lovely ladies are better fighters than the Clavats, with stronger attack and magic powers. But with a lower level of defence, they'll also feel the impact of a heavy blow a bit more, too. Used properly, Selkies are a strong choice.



Yukes

These tall, ferocious-looking blokes don't look at all like the sort to mince around with a bunch of saddos in a caravan. But hey, we're not bitter. Mind you, they've got the attack and defence skills of a legless donkey. They do have strong magic, though.



Paint me up!

Not to be tried on your neighbour's poodle...

Unfortunately, you can't kill your Moogle. It would have been a laugh, like when you hack at the chickens in *A Link to the Past*. But if you find a Moogle house, you can whip out a spray can and graffiti all over him. It's not just for fun, though: connect a GBA in single-player mode and the colour you spray him will change the function displayed on the portable. You can switch between a map and radar or an enemy detector.



This is a fictional creature and not covered by animal cruelty laws



True RPG freedom would allow you to nick the life-preserving Crystal and allow the townspeople to suffocate. We're not sick or anything...

The wizard speaks...

Tricky questions answered

All this GBA link-up co-operation malarkey might sound a bit confusing to you. Or maybe you just don't get the concept of a four-player RPG. We don't blame you. We were a bit baffled at first too, but now we can explain every little detail of how it all works so that you'll never need to lose sleep again. Look into the Eye of the Tickle... Shazzam!

Q: What happens when a player wants to stop fighting and have a fiddle with their menu and item screens? Does it stop everyone else from playing, too?

A: No it doesn't – and a bloody good job, too. In multiplayer mode, all menu fiddling is done on that particular player's GBA screen where it won't disturb the on-screen action or spoil the fun for the other players. You'll have to watch out though because the character who's checking their kit will be vulnerable on screen and the other players will have to be guardians. Also, the others won't be able to wander off without that player, so they have to stay put until they're done fiddling around.

Q: What if a player snuffs it? Do they stay dead for the whole stage?

A: Death is bad, but not irreversible. If you die, you become a transparent ghost and all you can do is wave your hands to get the attention of the other players. Hopefully, one of them will have a revival spell that'll bring you back. If not, it's tough luck. You'll have to remain a see-through corpse.

by Timmy 'Shazzam' Tickle.



Q: What if I start a game with four players, but one of my mates nips off home, can the rest of us still continue the same adventure without them?

A: Yeah, if one of your soppy mates has to get home before their mummy kicks their ass for getting back after dark, it won't affect your quest. In fact, any saved game can be played by any number of players, no matter how many there were when the game was started. A single-player game can be resumed by four players and vice versa. Or you could just get some cooler mates.

Q: Does the computer decide which poor bloke has to lug around the Chalice?

A: The computer won't make any tough decisions for you at all. You'll have to decide with your mate who carries it. It's best to take it in turns, or give it to the player nearest it when a battle is won.

Q: If I wanted to join in an adventure that's already been played for many hours, will I be too weak to stand a fighting chance against the more powerful foes we'll meet at that stage?

A: Hmm... a tough one. Wait while I consult the Eye. Hold on. Mmm... SHAZZAM! The Eye says if you get your mates to buy some upgrades for you with all the cash they should have gathered by that point you'll be fine. Now all bow down to the all-seeing power of the Eye.

many of the bosses. We prefer real-time battles to turn-based ones, but compared to the awesome control you had over Link in *The Wind Waker*, this is quite poor.

The main blunder is the bother of having to choose your desired command by flicking through a command list with the shoulder buttons. There's no lock-on or fixed targeting either, meaning you can't block an attack then dive in for a counter strike a split second later – when you're in defence mode you can't attack and vice versa. It doesn't stop the game from being fun, it just takes some of the skill out of surviving a fight. You just ruck until you're low on health, then heal with an item, which are plentiful.

No matter how tiresome it may get, it's well worth defeating every enemy you can find. Each and every nasty that you slaughter will drop an item, from food and money to spell balls and artefacts, which you need to level-up your character.

The levels are intricate in design and sometimes confusing, but you won't get lost when using the handy GBA screen when connected to a GameCube. In multiplayer, one player will have a radar on their GBA and another will have a scaled overhead map. None of the other players will have access to your specified feature, forcing you to talk to each other.

One player will be screaming out when enemies and items are nearby and the other will be giving directions. It's cool.

If you're playing on your own, you can still plug a GBA into port two and it will display a map, but that's nowhere near as fun as working with others.

And that's pretty much the same with every aspect of *FFCC*. It's best played with a bunch of people. Play it on your own and you're only getting the lightweight experience. You still get to explore all the worlds and fight all the same enemies, but not in the same way.

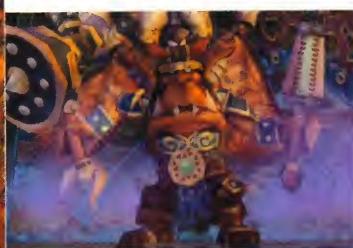
As a clan, fighting a boss is a team game of role playing – one player can lunge in with their sword, delivering brutal blows while another casts killer spells from afar. If anyone is running low on health, another player can keep cure spells handy to power-up his team-mates. It's a brilliant collaborative effort. In single player you just slice and run, and again, and again. Get low on health, pause the game and heal, then continue the same repetitive cycle. It's not as fun.

Played on your own, *FFCC* is like a tamed *Final Fantasy* game, simplified for gamers that wouldn't enjoy the rambling style of the *FF* titles on PS2. But get a party of fighters round and you'll have a blast like no other. *Mike Jackson*

"FFCC is best with multiple players – lone gamers will have to compromise."



(Above) Nice monster hands what else did you get for Xmas?



So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You've got three mates with GBAs and you're prepared for all-night gaming sessions.

No if...

You're expecting a complex tale of epic proportions, like the other *FF* games.

You'll love it if you like...

... RPGs, but want a break from turn-based battles and characters with 20 attributes.

GRAPHICS

9

Beautiful. The towns look so blissful you'll almost want to live there.

SOUND

8

Every jingle is well suited to the levels, but some of them can be annoying.

GAMEPLAY

7

The fighting is too basic and it'd be better without the command switching.

LIFE SPAN

15 HOURS

We blasted through to get this review done – proper exploring will take ages.

VERDICT

> From the moment you put *FFCC* on, you'll want to explore and the four-player mode is an experience like no other. However, the under-achieving battle controls can make the single-player mode a little tiresome.



BEST BIT: The graphics. Gorgeous towns and amazing character detail.

WORST BIT: The fighting. Even the bosses are defeated in the same way.

SECOND OPINION

> While it looks the nuts there's something lacking from the single-player game that would've made this great. Multiplayer's fun, but it's a hassle and expensive. *Dominic Wint*

Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"A TEAM DREAM"

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86 %

What We Know

All the Nintendo news you need

Prime Time

Metroid Prime 2 heads up a killer 2004 line up for the gaming company of choice.

This year, you'll be glad you bought a GameCube. Nintendo has confirmed to *NOM UK* that both *Metroid Prime 2* and *Geist* will appear in the second half of 2004, and that *Pokémon Fire Red* and *Leaf Green* will be released before the year's end.

Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles hits on March 11th, *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* is down for early March too, and *Kirby Air Ride* arrives on February 26th. *Pokémon Channel* is down for April, with *Mario Golf* and *Pokémon Colosseum* slated for the summer.

In our exclusive interview with Shigeru Miyamoto starting on p28, he mentions the successor to *The Wind Waker* and that Nintendo will be talking about that this year.

Nintendo Europe

confirmed to us that the game will appear on GameCube, but refused to be drawn on a release date.

Interestingly, American games magazine *EGM* reports that this *Zelda* game and the fabled *Mario 128* will be unveiled at this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles in May. Indeed, *EGM* goes on to suggest that both of the games will be released this year. What a year that would make for GameCube owners!

Pokémon aside, it's a busy year on GBA too. *Sword of Mana* hits on March 18th, followed by Rare's *Sabre Wulf*. *Metroid Zero Mission* is down for April, and *F-Zero 2* and *Donkey Kong Country* will hit in the Summer. There's also a brand-new GBA *Legend of Zelda* game, *Fire Emblem* and *Boktai*. A fifth *Mario Advance* outing before the year's end is also a possibility for all you GBA owners.

How about that then? Samus, Link and Mario: the holy trinity. As ever, we'll have the latest developments in the Nintendo universe first in these very pages. Strap yourself in for an awesome year.



Feedback Team

Instant reaction to this month's hot topics from people like you.

Want to have a go? Send your name, address, phone number and email address to <i>NOM UK</i> 's Feedback Team, <i>Nintendo Official Magazine</i> UK, Empact Active, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 5UW. And please include a half-decent photo.	1 DO YOU CARE ABOUT GAMECUBE BEING ONLINE?	2 WOULD YOU LIKE PS2 FF GAMES INSTEAD OF FF:CC?	3 HAS SONIC THE HEDGEHOG HAD HIS DAY?	4 ARE YOU HAPPY TO WAIT FOR N5'S NEW GAMES?	5 WHICH GENRE IS MOST NEGLECTED ON GAMECUBE?
 WILL POTTER, GODALMING	No, even though it brings some good qualities it's a waste of time.	I have a few of the <i>Final Fantasy</i> games on PSone and PS2, but I think <i>Crystal Chronicles</i> will be better.	Sonic's a legend, but the recent games have been a bit pants.	I think the N5 should be delayed – they can still do so much with the GameCube.	There's not one lightgun game. They had them on NES and Super NES so why not the GameCube?
 ANTHONY HOBSON, ASHTON IN MAKERFIELD	Not really. If I want multiplayer I'll have some mates round with a few chilled bevvies.	If any of the PS2 series should come to GameCube, there should be some new extras like side quests.	If Sonic's had his day, so has Mario! I think we'll be seeing a lot more from the spiky blue one in future.	To be honest I'd rather they appeared on GameCube; they're something to play on the system.	RPGs, well in Europe at least, and Real-Time Strategies.
 ADAM MOSS, LIVES IN A BIN	I don't care about Nintendo being online. Maybe the N5, but not GameCube. I like games as they are.	I would much prefer <i>Crystal Chronicles</i> . Why settle for PS2 ports when this looks so amazing?	Sonic lives, but the games are looking dated. Maybe the next should be a brand new game exclusive to N5.	Sales of N5 would go through the roof so in the long term it's better. These games will be amazing.	Probably sneak-'em-ups like <i>Splinter Cell</i> . But <i>Splinter Cell 2</i> and <i>Twin Snakes</i> should clear that up.

WIN Mario Party 5 and a 'Cube

D'ya fancy some hectic mini-game action? Five lucky gamers can win a copy of *Mario Party 5*. The first of the five drawn will also get a GameCube to play it on. Already got a GameCube... have TWO! That's called being double cool. Our Dean's got four GameCubes. That's called hardcore.

- Q. What console was the first *Mario Party* game released on?
 a. Super NES
 b. Nintendo 64
 c. Game Boy Advance



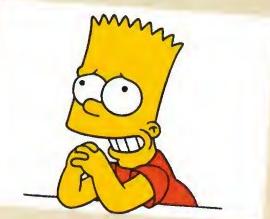
Text: write 'nomcomp PARTY' then the letter of your answer and send it to 83149
Phone: 0905 053 1101
Post: *Mario Party 5 Competition, NOM UK, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, PE2 5UW*

TOO MUCH INFORMATION

SEGA TO SUE EA

The idea of *Crazy Taxi* is to 'make some crazy money'. Sega is clearly hoping its impending legal action against Fox and Electronic Arts will have the same result. See, Sega invented taxi games that are a bit crazy.

They have a patent on them, apparently. Enter *Simpson's Road Rage*, see phrase 'bang to rights', exit money from EA's bank account. Crazy!



IT'S A FIX

Sonic the Hedgehog on Mega Drive is the best game ever made. The end. That's the result of a survey of UK gamers conducted by ELSPA. *Ocarina* was second and a vague '*Super Mario*' charts at eight. Did they ask you? They certainly never asked us, so we're suspicious. For the record, *GoldenEye 007* was 14th and *Super Mario Kart* was 17th. What a farce.

N5 HAS A SMALL DISC

Nintendo guru Satoru Iwata let slip an interesting info McNugget to Japanese mag *Famitsu*. N5 will, apparently, play the games from the 'previous generation' – mimicking the backwards compatibility Sony offered with PS2. He also suggested that graphics technology was reaching a plateau and Nintendo was looking at other ways to amaze you.

PHOENIX NIGHTS

The idea of *Harry Potter* books is that kids don't rot their brains playing video games. But hey, books suck and imagination is for the weak.

Bring on more games. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* will be out on GBA and GC later in the year. You'll get to fly Buckbeak the Hippogriff, whatever that is.



KIRBY FOURPLAY

The next Kirby game will be released on Game Boy Advance. *Kirby: Great Labyrinth of the Mirror* puts you in control of a team of four Kirbies, who communicate by mobile phone and team up to solve puzzles. No UK date has been set, but at least there's life after *Air Ride*.

AMERICA: KEEP IT

Another issue, another limited-edition GBA SP. Except this time, we want no part of it. Due for release in the US in February, it has a silver bottom and a black top. It looks like a mistake. Like they made too many black tops and silver bottoms, and somehow had to use them all up. But who'd be silly enough to fall for that? "Gosdarn! Ain't that sweet!" drawls Hank in his Alabama accent. Sold.



Free Zelda disc gets even freer

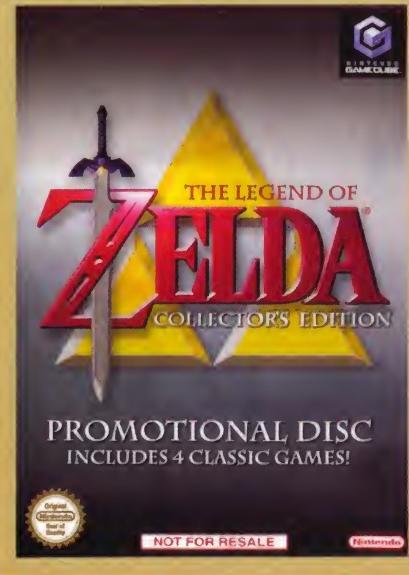
It's the latest thrilling chapter in the story of the Zelda collector's disc.

For this month only, you can get hold of the much-coveted *Zelda Collector's Disc* easier than ever before. Buying *The Wind Waker*, *F-Zero GX*, *Mario Kart: Double Dash*, *1080° Avalanche*, *Mario Party 5* or *Eternal Darkness* automatically qualifies you for the freebie of justice. Great news if you've got Christmas spends.

Grabbing two games from the Player's Choice range also nets you the disc, with *Luigi's Mansion*, *Pikmin*, *Super Smash Bros. Melee*, *Super Mario Sunshine*, *Metroid Prime*, *Star Fox Adventures* and *Mario Party 4* the titles that count.

That's right, no more saving up Stars and hoping for the best. Just buy some games and let Nintendo see the receipts. *Zelda* glory arrives in a shrink-wrapped DVD case, bursting to share its historical delights with you. Or resigned to sitting unopened in your loft for a fat eBay profit in years to come if you prefer.

This offer only applies in January though, so get your Pegasus Shoes on and make it happen. You'll regret it if you don't.





What's on your Melee CD?

Smashing your brother isn't on, unless he's beaten your high score. A *Smash Bros.* CD, however... now that's different.

You voted it your seventh-best game of all-time back in issue 132, so we'd only look like fools if we ignored your love for this wicked Nintendo beat-'em-up.

With that in mind, *NOM UK* presents the second of our Nintendo Soundtrack CD series – an orchestral performance of 15 awesome tracks from GameCube's *Super Smash Bros. Melee*, recorded live in Japan. Previously only available from *Famitsu Cube + Advance*

magazine in Japan and as a subscription gift with *Nintendo Power* in the US, the CD is now exclusive to *NOM UK*. These bad boys are extremely rare and no unofficial mags are gonna get them!

From the amazing intro tune to the tracks on Planet Corneria, Great Bay, Planet Venom and DK Jungle, this game is packed with a whole hour of *Melee* magic. Read on to find out more about each track on your free CD...

Track 1 Planet Corneria

With a clash of cymbals the CD blasts you off into outer space to the world of Arwings and the Great Fox team. Remixed from the final Star Wing battle with Andross in the finale of the 16-bit classic, this rocks.



Track 2 Jungle Garden

Remember *Donkey Kong Country*? No?! Get out, you heathen! Everyone else will love the fact that those jungle beats have made it onto this CD and it's so good it makes us want *Donkey Konga* even more!



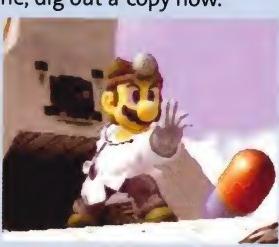
Track 3 Great Bay Shrine

We know you loved our *Zelda* CD back in issue 130 and now there's even more *Zelda* magic to be enjoyed. *Zelda I* and *The Adventure of Link* have been given a big band make-over – and just wait for the added wind effects.



Track 4 Dr Mario

It's not quite the classic *Tetris*, but this is a puzzle game you need to play. If you haven't got one, dig out a copy now. The plinky-plonky xylophone from the game's awesome Fever tune makes it truly memorable.



Track 5 Original Medley

The awesome music from SSBM's menu screen is all here for you to enjoy. Let's face it, this is just one more reason why Nintendo makes incredible games. It's also the *NOM UK* magazine-completion music.



Track 6 Fountain of Dreams

Not to be out-done by other, less pink and round Nintendo celebrities, Kirby's arenas have made it onto your CD, too. Check this one out if you're a fan of the Fountain of Dreams battle arena – or even if you're not.



Track 7 Pokémon Medley

It may be slightly darker than most of the other tracks on the album, but Pokémaniaacs are still going to love this super-mix from the Stadium arena. Go, wild Japanese orchestra, show us your music skillz!



Track 8 Opening

The opening to *Melee* is at very least jaw dropping, if not the best music on GameCube. If that music gets your pulse racing, then slap this track on now! If it doesn't, you're reading the wrong magazine.



Track 9 Planet Venom

Their running might not be in sync with the effect in the game, but the start of *Lylat Wars* is one to savour. Now you can relive the sounds of a Fox McCloud classic over and over again right here on this CD.



Track 10 Yoshi's Story

Not exactly an N64 classic, but the sound the Yoshis make when running in mid-air is classic. The music too is as sweet as the honey made in heaven and it's yours to own on this CD.



Track 11 Depth of Brinstar

Mario, Zelda, DK and now it's the turn of another A-list Nintendo star. Somehow the scuttling of Samus' enemies has come alive and her landing music is here, too.



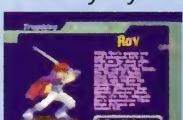
Track 12 Great Medley

The longest track on the CD will definitely bring a smile to the face of every Mario fan. *Super Mario Bros.*, *SMB 2* and *SMB 3* are here, even the cave music from *Super Mario World*!



Track 13 Fire Emblem

Almost unknown here, Marth and Roy have made it onto the CD anyway. And with the release of the GBA game in the US, why not see what all the fuss is about with this track.



Track 14 Green Greens

By this point you should be in Nintendo heaven. If not then you should go and hide in a corner. Check out this track for the cloud level music in *Mario 64* and underwater tunes from *Super Mario Bros. 3*.



Track 15 Rainbow Cruise

The final track is from *Super Mario 64* and we're sure you'll agree it's a crowning glory for the whole album. The crowd certainly loved it – at one point they break out into spontaneous applause. Sweet.



GameCube has seen some classic titles since it was launched, but surely none has been closer to the hearts of Nintendo fans than *Super Smash Bros. Melee*.



On August 27th 2002, the Japanese Philharmonic Orchestra played live at the Tokyo Cultural Center in the first-ever live concert dedicated to Nintendo games.

Conducted by Taizo Takemoto, the orchestra played a variety of medleys from classic Nintendo titles, including *Zelda I* and *II*, *Super Mario 64*, the *Metroid* series and *Pokémon*.



During the Nintendo gig, *Melee's* director Masahiro Sakurai and the voice of Kirby and Ness, Makiko Ohmoto, appeared on stage. Reports that Mr Miyamoto jumped up on stage and did a karaoke rendition of the Black Eyed Peas' *Where Is The Love?* were unconfirmed at the time of going to press.

NOM UK phoned the London Philharmonic Orchestra and asked them to play some old Game & Watch tunes for us, but when they started using bad words we hung up.



Hardware

Games are software. Here you'll find all the stuff that isn't.

★ CRAP ★★ NOT AS CRAP ★★★ AVERAGE ★★★★ WICKED ★★★★★ THE NUTS

ADVANCE GAME PORT



Easy to use?

It couldn't be simpler – plug it into the GameCube's Memory Card slot. It's the lazy boy's player. You can stick it in your pocket to take to a mate's house and, when plugged in, it won't change your Cube into a hefty block. ★★★★☆

Cost?

At £29.99, this is probably the cheapest route to GBA playing you can get outside of Gamestation's second-hand cabinet. If you don't care about not being able to play old GBC and GB games, this player is a good choice and saves you a tenner. ★★★★☆

Features?

This is where the Advance Game Port loses out to the official GB Player. It will ONLY play Game Boy Advance games, nothing else. So if you've got a massive collection of old GB classics, forget it – they won't work. ★★★★☆

GB PLAYER



Easy to use?

Not at all difficult, but you will have to remove the port cover from your GameCube and make sure you don't lose it. And you have to use a screwdriver or any makeshift tool to tighten the screws on the bottom. ★★★★☆

Cost?

The GB Player will set you back £39.99. If you haven't got a GBA at all, that's a cheap ticket to playing great games like *Metroid Fusion*, but if you already own the handheld, you may find it tough to blow the cash on this instead of a new GameCube game. ★★★★☆

Features?

The official Player will allow you to play all Game Boy games, including GBA, GBC and the classic GB cartridges. You can also zoom in full-screen or have a colourful border, change the picture sharpness and use a GBA as a controller. ★★★★☆



Feel the Bass

■ 4Gamers 5.1 Speaker System ■ £129.99 ■ Out Now

The atmosphere created by the awesome soundtrack in *Metroid Prime* is epic. The rumbling crashes of a boss fight in *Zelda: The Wind Waker* pound at your chest. Actually, no they don't, unless you've got a stupidly loud speaker system. If you like bass as much as we do, you need this puppy. Although 4Gamers' 5.1 Speaker System doesn't support Dolby Pro Logic II (the best surround GameCube is capable of), it does do DPL I, Dolby Digital and DTS. This means, when you're playing your GameCube or watching a DVD, the whole neighbourhood will know about it. Oh yes! ★★★★☆



COLLECTOR'S CORNER

THIS MONTH: PICK A PECK OF PLASTIC PAC-MEN

Pac-Man figurines

Coleco, 1982

Current Asking Price:
around £3 each

In 1982, Pac-Man was the man. Everybody wanted a piece of this video game icon, even buying little plastic Pac figures. Pac was sold along with a bridal-veiled Ms. Pac-Man (not pictured), so 80s kids could pretend they were marrying a yellow dot.



Chris Kohler scopes out tomorrow's high-priced museum items, today.

Pac-Mania (NES)

Tengen, 1991

Current asking price: around £20

This year, Pac-Man teamed up with Nintendo. But just a decade ago, the circular one was the unofficial mascot for an anti-Nintendo backlash. Rogue Namco offshoot, Tengen, reverse-engineered the NES and produced games like *Pac-Mania* without permission from Ninty. Thus, this fun, pseudo-3D isometric maze game is quite rare.

PAC-MANIA



Stuff

Toys... and everything else we can find!

GET CROSS! Toys of a game you can't play - out now

Look guys – when we talk about *Animal Crossing* from time to time, it's not to send you into a vengeful killing frenzy. We just know that some people are so into Nintendo, the territorial lockouts on import games cease to be an issue. This is for them. It's also for you, if you can look at Nintendo-derived toys without crying and going berserk. Little *Animal Crossing* houses and items! Jack, the bloke with a pumpkin for a head! The annoying little mole! The Gyroid! Yeah?! We bought a load of this stuff and one day we'll set up a proper little village and take pictures of that. Unless you write in threatening to kill us if we do.



£3 OFF ANY GBA OR GAMECUBE GAME

For more information on Nintendo products at GAME, point your browser at www.game.uk.com

- 1 Offer only valid on redemption of this voucher, which cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or voucher.
- 2 Voucher is redeemable at any GAME store in the UK and Ireland.
- 3 This voucher is not recoverable and not exchangeable for cash.
- 4 Only one voucher may be used per product.
- 5 This voucher cannot be redeemed against a pre-owned purchase.
- 6 This offer may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice.
- 7 Valid against any GameCube or GBA game priced £29.99 or over.
- 8 Redeemable against software and accessories only.
- 9 The voucher is valid until February 12th 2004.



034410100796

GAME

www.game.uk.com

FUTURE FIVE

This month, we wish we could play these games. But we can't.

5 KILLER 7

By the time you read this, we'll be playing the Japanese one. So we'll finally be in a position to tell you just what this gorgeous-looking game plays like. The UK release date is some way off though. Second half of the year at best.



4 GEIST

What's going on with this? Hang on, that's not right. You're supposed to ask us. We've seen nothing new since E3, but we're told it's on track for the second half of this year. After finishing *Prime* again, we've got an FPS-shaped hole in our lives.



3 METROID ZERO MISSION

Ahh, *Metroid*. We'll have a load of that. *Metroid Prime 2* is miles off, but *Zero Mission* is out in April. The last GBA *Metroid* (*Fusion*) ruled and this is the first time that two Samus games have come out on the same console.



2 MARIO TENNIS

A cheap GBC *Mario Tennis* from the shops rekindled our desire. Camelot did a solid job with *Mario Golf* on GameCube, so this will be special. And it won't turn you blind like *Mario's Tennis* on Virtual Boy, we imagine.



1 A NEW GAMECUBE ZELDA

Just hearing Shigsy mention it in our exclusive Q&A on p28 set our Link-loving hearts on fire. It can't be anything other than awesome. Remember *Majora's Mask*? Play it on your *Zelda* Collector's Disc now and remind yourself



Nintendo®

Know-it-all

Mr and Mrs Love Match Special



NAME THE HANDHELD RELEASED BETWEEN THE GAME BOY AND GAME BOY COLOR.

"Umm... the Game Boy Pocket?" (1)

That's the fella. Hey, did you know Japan got a back-lit version of that rude boy?

HOW MANY DIFFERENT EXITS ARE THERE ON SUPER MARIO WORLD ON THE SUPER NES?

"Err... I'll guess 96 – that's how many levels there are, right?" (1)

Some levels are the same, but have different EXITS. That's why we said EXITS, though.

WHAT WAS THE ONLY NINTENDO HOME CONSOLE LAUNCHED WITHOUT MARIO?

"That's GameCube – if it's not I'm gonna look very stupid." (1)

Look at your picture, friend. You look very stupid anyway. Stupid and correct.

IN POKÉMON WHAT DOES A CHARMANDER EVOLVE INTO?

"I think it's Charisaur or Charizard, or Charisomething." (0)

Your vagueness does you no credit whatsoever. It's a Charmeleon.

WHO IS EIJI AONUMA?

"I really don't know, so I won't insult him by guessing." (0)

If it's not Miyamoto, you lot don't care do you? Shigsy this, Shigsy that...

WHICH GAME SERIES STARS THE BELMONT FAMILY?

"Err... isn't that Castlevania?" (1)

Isn't what Castlevania? Oh the answer! Yes. That's right.

IN WHAT GAME WOULD YOU FIND GOHMA, VOLVAGIA AND TWINROVA?

"Oh, [expletive removed]. If I don't get this... it's Zelda... Ocarina of Time." (1)

They're also the next three useless foreigners on Gerard Houllier's shopping list.

YASHIN IS THE EVIL ALTER EGO OF WHICH NINTENDO CHARACTER?

"Nope. Dunno." (0)

If only he was a GIANT with YELLOW SKIN he'd be memorable, right?

WHICH CONSOLE DID METROID 2 APPEAR ON?

"I'll say the NES." (0)

You can say it. You can keep on saying it. It's not right though.

WHICH IS THE ONLY COURSE TO FEATURE RAIN IN MARIO KART: SUPER CIRCUIT?

"I don't know it that well, but I'll say... Luigi Circuit?" (1)

That was a total guess, Grace. You can't take the credit for that...

FINAL SCORE

6 You the man! We're not suggesting you did well, we're merely stating a biological fact... and you won.

4 You had an opportunity to strike a blow in this male-dominated games world, but you blew it. Unlucky...

DOM'S DEALS



This month's killer gaming bargains.

GAMECUBE



Capcom Vs SNK 2 EO
£14.99 (www.play.com)



Resident Evil £9.98
(www.game.uk.com)



Lost Kingdoms £6.99
(www.woolworths.co.uk)



Judge Dredd: Dredd Vs
Death £14.99
(www.gameplay.co.uk)

GAME BOY ADVANCE



Street Fighter Alpha 3
£9.99 (www.play.com)



Metroid Fusion £14.99
(www.woolworths.co.uk)

GAME BLITZ

What's incoming on Nintendo...

16/1/2004

- Need for Speed: Underground (GBA)

30/1/2004

- Yu-Gi-Oh! The Sacred Cards (GBA)
- NFL Street (GC)



6/2/2004

- Rogue Ops (GC)

20/2/2004

- James Bond 007 in... Everything or Nothing (GC)
- Gotcha Force (GC)

27/2/2004

- Harvest Moon (GBA)



5/3/2004

- Spawn Armageddon (GC)



11/3/2004

- Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles (GC)

12/3/2004

- Sabrewulf (GBA) • Disney's Aladdin (GBA)

19/3/2004

- Sword of Mana (GBA)
- R: Racing Evolution (GC) • MTX: Mototrax (GC)

26/3/2004

- Harvest Moon (GC) • Kirby Air Ride (GC)



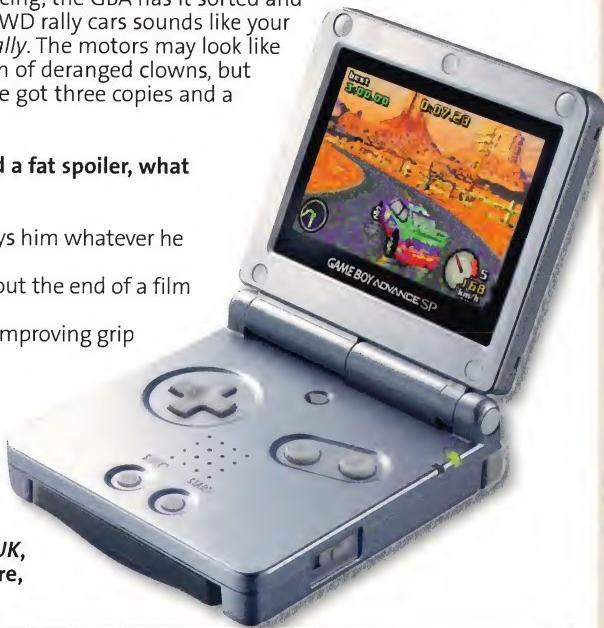
WIN GBA SP and TG Rally

When it comes to rally car racing, the GBA has it sorted and if spanking the nuts out of 4WD rally cars sounds like your thing, you need a fix of *TG Rally*. The motors may look like they were painted by a bunch of deranged clowns, but the gameplay kicks ass. We've got three copies and a GBA SP to give away.

Q: If a rally driver said he had a fat spoiler, what would he be referring to?

- A huge rich person who buys him whatever he wants, whenever he wants
- A lardy bloke who blabs about the end of a film before someone's seen it
- A wing strapped to his car, improving grip

See Terms and Conditions on p3



Attention all Pokémon fans!

Nintendo and Gamestation are teaming up to give you the opportunity to download your own EON ticket for *Pokémon Ruby* and *Pokémon Sapphire* in February. The EON ticket allows you to visit the Southern Island to encounter Latias (in *Pokémon Ruby*) or Latios (in *Pokémon Sapphire*). But before receiving these exclusive EON tickets, players have to collect five badges in *Pokémon Ruby* and *Pokémon Sapphire* by defeating five of the Gym Leaders and also activate the mystery events.

Only one EON ticket is required for you to travel to the Southern Island, but when you download the EON ticket for yourself, you will also receive other EON tickets to share with your friends, using a Game Boy Advance Link Cable and a pair of Game Boy Advance consoles.



Check out the next issue of NOM UK for more information along with where and when you can download your own EON ticket! Also, keep checking the Nintendo website at www.nintendo.co.uk for updates.

From the Kart

NOM UK chews the fat with the men that made *Mario Kart: Double Dash*



Q: What inspired you to have two characters per kart?

Takahashi: We've all seen a side-car race (motorcycle combination) and thought that two-rider racing seemed more fun than one-rider racing. Ultimately, we decided on the tandem ride, not a sidecar, but involving more game players appeared to have been a good decision for fun play.

Q: The game could have been even more challenging with a 200cc class. Did you ever consider putting that in?

Mizuki: Sounds like UK people are better game players than we are! As a matter of fact, when we had just completed the development of *Double Dash*, we immediately received feedback that the difficulty level might be a bit too high. Actually, when we were making the game, we had repeatedly discussed among ourselves what should be the upper speed limit without disturbing the fun game play. Since – when playing the *Mario Kart* games – strategies on how to use the items as well as driving fast play an important role, we decided that 150cc should be the upper limit.

Q: Why wasn't the game more like *Super Smash Bros. Melee* with lots of unlockable secrets?

Mizuki: If you wanted more secrets, then we are sorry that we could not live up to your expectations. Please understand that our development team had to put more emphasis on the game's play balance in order to realise the most enjoyable competitions with your players, rather than on the number of secrets.

Q: Did you consider expanding the scope of the game to make it a Nintendo universe racing game like *Smash Bros.* did with fighting? So you could race Link and Mario around Outset Island, for example?

Miyamoto: It may be an interesting idea. In fact, I have received similar requests in the past from other fans. Since

THE NOM SURVEY Not just for kids

We asked: Is Nintendo still perceived as being for kids?

POLL RESULT

YES 43%
NO 57%

■ It has had quite a few titles for older gamers, but needs to make more, especially first-party ones.

TONY MULLIGAN

■ Yes I think it's for kids, but a lot of adults love Nintendo because it's so much fun.

MICHAEL LEE

■ There are loads of people over 30 who live for Nintendo. A lot of the time you see games that aren't even suitable for kids.

ANGELA WILLIAMS

■ No way! I'm not a kid and I've got a GC, GBA and a GBA SP. If Nintendo was for kids, there would be no *Metroid Prime*.

AARON CLEGG

This month we ask:

• Will Sony's PSP spell the end for Game Boy Advance?

Email YES or NO and a brief comment to: michael.jackson@emap.com - don't forget to include your name!

WIN Wrong Turn and Jeepers Creepers 2 DVDs

Thanks to Pathé Distribution Limited, we're dishing out even more DVD love. This month five lucky winners will get a *Wrong Turn* DVD (out February 2nd), a copy of the *Jeepers Creepers 2* DVD (out January 19th) and a *Jeepers Creepers 2* soundtrack CD. Sorry guys, but you have to be 18 or over to enter this spine-chilling competition.



Q. What game soundtrack CD was given away with issue 130 of NOM?

- a. The Donkey Konga Kongo
- b. Zelda Nintendo Soundtrack
- c. Tetris: Drum and Bass Remix

By text: write 'nomcomp DVD', then the letter of your answer and send it to 83149

By phone: 0905 053 1103

By post: DVD Bundle Competition, NOM UK, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, PE2 5UW

we are always reviewing various possibilities, such a game might be produced by Nintendo in the future.

Q: What did you change in the game after the criticism levelled at it during E3?

Mizuki: Mainly in order to intensify the sense of speed, we have adjusted the speeds of karts, positions of camera and drift behaviours. We, the development teams, make much use of the feedback from people outside of Nintendo.

Q: Is it difficult to keep a game like Double Dash a secret? You must have been dying to tell people all about it during the development stages.

Sugiyama: Everyone wants to slip secrets, no matter what game they are working on, but the ability to keep confidentiality is one of the most important jobs and a prerequisite for being a games developer.

Q: Did anything you had planned have to be cut from Mario Kart: Double Dash because of time constraints?

Mizuki: We were able to incorporate all the features we had originally planned. The variations of the karts were actually increased from what we had considered at the beginning. On the other hand, several features were not included, but it was not because of time constraints – it was because they were not fun enough.

Q: When making Double Dash, did you look to Super Mario Kart and Mario Kart 64 as the benchmark?

Mizuki: Yes, we did. Not only the two subject titles, we also reviewed the Game Boy Advance version as well. Among them, we used to play the N64 versions quite often since Double Dash was going to become its immediate descendant.

Q: What's the future for the Mario Kart series? Online?

Sugiyama: In the future, when online infrastructures should be improved, allowing people around the world to play Mario Kart together comfortably and without any of today's difficulties, we would like to review the ideas for an unprecedented Mario Kart game which would be very unique to online gaming.

Q: Where did you get the inspiration for the weapons?

Mizuki: We started by thinking what weapons would make the racing more fun. For example, we thought, "it must be exciting to blast off multiple karts at once," and decided to include Bom-Omb in the course. When we were running out of ideas, we consulted with a number of materials to learn which character used what weapons in the past series.

Q: Tell us a secret about Mario Kart that nobody else knows.

Mizuki: Ah... okay, here we go. Until just before the E3 show, the special item Donkey Kong could use was not the Jumbo Banana but a barrel. The original arcade *Donkey Kong* game inspired us to use a barrel, but we could not make the best use of it as his special item, so we opted for the Jumbo Banana. Want another one? Of all the different international versions of *Mario Kart Double Dash*, we completed the European version first. We really wanted the European fans to play with the game as soon as possible.

Q: What is your favourite combination of drivers?

Sugiyama: Peach and Yoshi. I use Peach's special item for the offence and Yoshi's for the defence.

Takahashi: Mario and Luigi. They are the staple characters, after all. Plus, I have some special attachment to them because they were the characters we had created first for doing the experiments of the project.

Mizuki: Daisy and Koopa. I like Daisy because she has a good voice. I like Koopa because I like its Triple Shells.

Q: What's your fastest lap time on Baby Park?

Mizuki: At Nintendo Co., Ltd., the fastest lap we have internally confirmed among ourselves on Baby Park is 1:07:975 over a total of seven laps. The best time over a single lap was 0:09:176.

Q: Is there any way to recover from a banana slide like you could in Mario Kart 64?

Mizuki: No, there isn't. We thought that the novice players would find it rather difficult to evade the banana slip effect. As we wanted them to be engaged in thrilling racing even with the experienced players who would be able to use the effect, we decided to take out the feature.

THE NOM SURVEY

Keep it locked away... for now

We asked: should Nintendo bring the release of its next-generation home console forward to 2004?

POLL RESULT

YES 22%
NO 78%

■ The next console will flop if Nintendo brings it out too soon. People want a console that is up-to-date for more than two years.
ADAM MARABLE

■ Don't do it! We have only just bought the GameCube! We've no money left! Focus on the GameCube!
NATHAN and DAN LANGRIDGE

■ Bringing it out in 2004 would help establish Nintendo in the next generation of consoles, plus it would have an advantage over its competitors, as it would have a wider range of games.
TONY MULLIGAN

This month we ask:

- Do you believe that the next Mario and Zelda titles will make it onto GC?

Email YES or NO and a brief comment to: michael.jackson@emap.com – don't forget to include your name!

Unsung Heroes

Poochi, Yoshi's Island



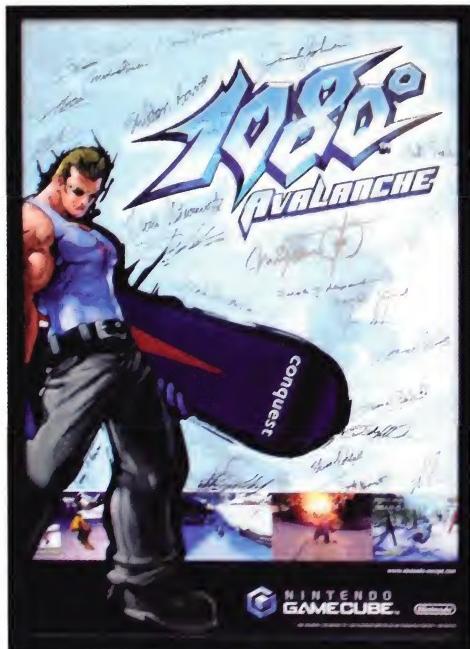
Poochi – a small, vital cog in Mario's wheel

WIN a signed 1080° poster, game and GC

This 1080° poster is no ordinary poster. It's not just been signed by the members of the 1080° development team, it has been blessed. The man HIMSELF, the master, the guru, Shigeru Miyamoto, has signed this poster. He's graced this piece of paper with his genius

Q. What does the number 1080 stand for?

- The number of degrees spun in an insane snowboarding trick
- The number of bones you'll break if you attempt snowboarding
- The price of the game in Japanese Yen



HOW TO ENTER

By text: write 'nomcomp 1080' then the letter of your answer and send it to 83149

By phone: 0905 053 1104

By post: 1080° Competition, NOM UK, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, PE2 5UW

REMEMBER! All entries for this issue's competitions must be received by 12/2/2004 to qualify.

See Terms and Conditions on p3

ISSUE 135 WINNERS

Mario Kart Competition

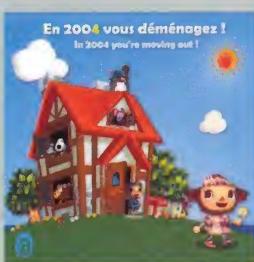
- Michael Anslow, Galmpton
- Emily Hutchinson, Harrogate
- Jo Uwins, Worthing
- Anna Foster, Caterham
- Anthony Cowen, Coventry

Fifth Element Competition

- Michael Brown, Horncurch
- Paul Atkinson, Rotherham
- Julie Griffiths, Chesterfield
- Ross Sellman-Leava, Willand
- Jackie Brown, Yardley

Croisement Animal

Surprise news from France as the Animal Crossing saga takes a twist.



Animal Crossing, eh? We won't give it up will we? Especially not now Nintendo France has confirmed to its chums in retail that *Animal Crossing* is on the way. Their Christmas card read 'In 2004, you'll soon meet over 300 new neighbours living in *Animal Crossing*'.

Before you ask, Nintendo Europe told us they "still hadn't set a release date". But given that the biggest obstacle to a European airing is localisation, this French translation is a step forward. The game already exists in an English-language PAL format, as it's been released in Australia. That game runs perfectly on a UK GameCube.

If we finally get to see a UK *Animal Crossing* in 2004, we hope it arrives at a reasonable price. Brilliant as the game is, it could be two years old by the time we get to see it.

WIN T.H.U.G gear

We're giving away a shed load of Tony Hawk merchandise for kids aged between ten and 18, all thanks to Sports Vision. The main £250 prize includes a jacket, a hooded top, a cap, a T-shirt, a backpack, a belt and a wallet. We're also throwing in a T-shirt for three runners-up. But do you know enough about Tony?

Q. How old was Tony Hawk when he retired?

a. 31 b. 48 c. 92



By text: write 'nomcomp TONY' then the letter of your answer and send it to 83149

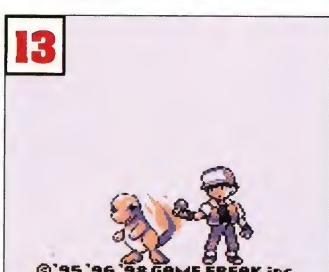
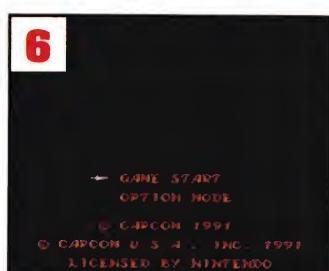
By phone: 0905 053 1105

By post: T.H.U.G. Competition, NOM UK, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, PE2 5UW

See Terms and Conditions on p3

The ROCK-HARD Quiz

All games have a beginning. It's called a title screen. Some are good and some are bad, but if they weren't there all the code would fall out. Now name them or shame yourself...



*Never played a game before? Like to check your answers? Just want to cheat? The answers are on p3...

Interview



Interview by Dean Scott

Dear Mr. Nintendo...

Nintendo's games guru has big plans for the future, bigger than your dreams, maybe. This is what Shigeru Miyamoto had to say when we put your questions to him.

He's the king of games. You're the subjects he's desperate to entertain. It made sense to let you talk to each other, to let the fanatical Nintendo gamers that read *NOM UK* put their burning questions to a living legend. We couldn't use them all, but we picked out the best ones and Miyamoto answered. Read on to see what Shigeru has to say about the mysterious N5, a brand-new *Zelda* game, something called *Mario 128* and a whole lot more besides.

NOM UK: Which other games designers/producers do you admire?

Miyamoto: There is no specific person I can think of. Please do not misunderstand; I am not speaking from arrogance. In fact, there are a number of developers who have made games that I think are wonderful. For example, I love *Pac Man* created by Mr. Iwatani of Namco so much that we even created *Pac Man vs.* for GameCube for ourselves, taking advantage of the connectivity between Game Boy Advance and GameCube.

However, video gaming is one of the entertainment commodities. As long as we are creating an entertainment commodity, the creators of them must always make an effort to entertain people with something unprecedented.

Looking back at the past and admiring others with great track records will not help us come up with unique and unprecedented ideas.

NOM UK: Now games are 3D, what do you think is the next significant step forward?

Miyamoto: It is something the readers of this magazine can hardly dream of. I know my answer is not too clear, but I am not casting you a Zen riddle because I am

Japanese! One of the biggest jobs we, game creators, have is to surprise people. Nintendo spread its NES system across the world and 3D games are found everywhere today because both of them were able to successfully destroy the fixed concept that people around the world had, therefore such a thing should not be impossible.

Further improvements in graphics, sound and online gaming are what anyone can reasonably expect today and, therefore, cannot generate the sheer surprise. We are experimenting and preparing a variety of 'surprises' now, but I am unable to talk about them here because the core element of great entertainment ideas is always something that is hard to hit upon, but easy to be imitated once known.

NOM UK: What can you tell us about the successor to GameCube?

Miyamoto: We are currently developing the machine that can realise a number of brand-new and enjoyable ideas. But I'm sorry that I can't dwell on the details today. In 2004, the titles which make use of the connectivity between GameCube and Game Boy Advance will be enriched, including *Pac Man vs.* and *Zelda: Four*

Swords. You will see that the great potential of GameCube will come to fruition. Before you will touch and play with our next-generation products, we will provide you with a number of unique experiences and unprecedeted joy with the existing machines, including Game Boy Advance. Please keep your eyes on Nintendo in 2004!

NOM UK: What was the best game you played in 2003?

Miyamoto: I have to compliment *Wario Ware Inc.* as it has successfully attracted new audiences, who would not have an interest in gaming otherwise. I also very much enjoyed playing *Wind Waker* myself.

NOM UK: Were you sad to see Rare part company with Nintendo?

Miyamoto: Well, we have had a long-time relationship. But we still talk with each other and there will be upsides too because the two companies continue to make something unique and original independently. While I miss the opportunity to work together as partners, since we are sharing the same posture of always challenging something new, I hope we will both grow as good rivals.



NOM UK: Our readers recently voted *Ocarina of Time* as their favourite game ever. Why do you think it endures as a classic, despite being technologically inferior to today's games?

Miyamoto: Thank you very much! The respect of game players is always the energy source for we creators to make something new. Maybe you know better than we do when it comes to the reason why *The Ocarina of Time* could be appreciated by so many people around the world who are having different languages, practices and customs. If there is something I can comment on from the creators' side, I think it may be attributed to the feeling of the *Zelda* universe.

Since I had started working on the very original *Legend of Zelda* which was launched in 1985 for NES, I have been making much of the ambience that players feel, as if they had actually visited and explored a miniature garden called Hyrule that can be placed in your desk drawer. In *The Ocarina of Time*, we committed ourselves to look carefully into both the total feel and each element of the expressions of the game so much that players would be able to even feel the coldness of the air.

However while graphics technologies may be improved, the technology itself help a player feel the coldness of the air. The atmosphere of the *Ocarina of Time* universe was created not by solely relying upon visual and audio effects. Maybe, it

was something which could have been created only when each different element of the game, including such details as how the scenario was made, how it progressed and how each character moved, was integrated in a desirable manner.

NOM UK: Why are you hiding *Mario 128* from the public?

Miyamoto: I'm sorry that I have been unable to talk much about that title. With *Mario 128*, I have been challenging many unprecedented things, not found in existing video games. These new ideas are prone to lose their freshness or to be imitated once they go public, so we must be extremely careful when we discuss such things. I have been feeling the pressure that I have to complete this project. Would you please be patient?

NOM UK: With mobile phone technology improving, what do you think is the future for handheld gaming?

Miyamoto: The designing of mobile phones must be done so that the product will be shaped most efficiently for making and receiving calls. What is required for mobile phones is significantly different from what is required for portable gaming. As well as the size and the positioning of the buttons, if you are playing with a video game for a short time, this would consume the batteries so much that you couldn't receive calls

thereafter, like what is actually happening today – this means it can't be called a mobile phone anymore! By now, both Game Boy Advance SP and mobile phones have become compact enough for us to carry both around, so it makes more sense to me to own them separately.

When we can create an entertainment that will be uniquely fun to be played with mobile phones, we will provide such by making use of the Game Boy Advance.

NOM UK: Have you got any new characters and franchises up your sleeve, or will you continue to work with the established ones?

Miyamoto: I would like to expand the *Pikmin* concept, but I would also love to collaborate with other new designers in order to create new characters.

NOM UK: How do you see Nintendo's place in the market evolving? Surely beating Sony isn't part of the strategy?

Miyamoto: Making something better than the others is always the idea which is easy to be understood, but it cannot be applied in the entertainment business. It is imperative that we always have the posture to do things that others don't, rather than to make the same thing better than the others. It can never be an easy job to create an entertainment that has been unprecedented and yet shall be appreciated by many people around the world. However, Nintendo has the track



EVERY DEVELOPER SHOULD TRY AND MAKE UNIQUE SOFTWARE.

record of expanding home video game entertainment to the world and of creating portable gaming entertainment, too. Please look forward to what Nintendo will create next.

NOM UK: Why don't supposedly 'Japanese' games like *Animal Crossing* and *Giftpia* ever get released in the UK?

Miyamoto: We at Nintendo are always trying to develop software that will be appreciated by people all around the world. On the other hand, however, peoples' likes and dislikes of game content are increasingly becoming apparent by each market in the world.

This is not confined to the European market, but some software in this industry in general is now marketed in limited ways. Plus, when we launch software in Europe, it is necessary to localise the software (such as translations into different languages). However, we really do not want European fans to wait for a long time, so that we are facilitating the localisation processes, with Nintendo of Europe as the driving force for this. As the result, *Mario Kart Double Dash* was introduced around the globe almost simultaneously, for example.

Please understand that we are putting significant time and resources into localisation activities and that we are hiring excellent localisation specialists so that the resulted software is achieving a very high level of localisation quality.

among this whole industry. We understand that we need to lay down the solid foundation so that we can introduce you to more new software. Once we can do this, games like *Animal Crossing* shall be available.

NOM UK: Is there going to be another *Zelda* game on GameCube? Perhaps a side story like *Majora's Mask*?

Miyamoto: In 2004 you will see a variety of activities regarding *The Legend of Zelda*. Nintendo of Europe will announce the launch date of the *Four Swords* game this year, which we have shown at ECTS and E3. The development of the new *Wind Waker* is under way and we would like to discuss the details in 2004, too.

NOM UK: What project are you working on right now?

Miyamoto: I am working on many titles with young directors. I am hoping to make something brand new by working with them and also hoping to teach them, too.

NOM UK: Would Nintendo ever consider making games purely for an adult audience, like *GTA Vice City*?

Miyamoto: 20 years ago, when Nintendo introduced its first games console in 1983, the NES system was called Family Computer System in Japan. Now that the young people who used to play with NES are becoming parents, circumstances are there for the whole family to enjoy

themselves with video games. As you know, while there are a number of games for Nintendo's systems solely made for adult players, we are putting a significant importance on the development of games that can be enjoyed either playing or watching others' playing among a group of friends or family members – from very small children to their grandfathers and grandmothers all together.

Today, a great many developers in the world are making astonishing numbers of games. Every one of us should try and make unique and independent software – that's what I believe.

NOM UK: The games that you've created and made show a great amount of imagination. Have you always been this creative, or did your imagination only develop after you started working for Nintendo?

Miyamoto: Thank you. But, honestly, I am always feeling that I really need something more than I don't possess in fact. If I say so, someone may say that I am trying to be a perfectionist. Actually, I am quite a lazy person by nature.

The reason why a lazy man like me can push myself so hard in order to complete my works is because there exists the company I work for, the job I have and the responsibilities I have to shoulder.

In that sense, I should say that I developed myself after I started working for Nintendo.

ファミコン ショウ



reporter John Ricciardi

● Famicom explosion ● Wake up with Mario

FAMICOM 20TH ANNIVERSARY BLOWOUT!

THE LEVEL-X FAMICOM MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Whoever said museums had to be boring? Last month, a new exhibition kicked off at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography that every game fan on Earth should see. The Level-X Famicom 20th Anniversary Video game Exhibition is a celebration of 20 years of Gaming culture, with a focus on Nintendo's 8-bit Family Computer, or Famicom (that's a NES to you and me).

The exhibition features a number of historically significant pieces of gaming memorabilia, the highlight of which is a complete set of Famicom games — over 1,200 in total — all in their original packaging. Other notables include: original planning documents for numerous classic games (fun fact: Pokémon was originally called *Capsule Monsters* and was first pitched in 1990); video-taped interviews with numerous industry figureheads including Shigeru Miyamoto, Hideo Kojima and Yuji Naka, among others; the very last Famicom ever produced, on loan from Nintendo; and a whole lot more.

It's the ultimate showcase for young and old gamers alike. Us old-timers can revel in the sheer nostalgic value of it all, while you younger types can get yourselves a fantastic, hands-on visual history lesson on the most important, most influential gaming system of all-time.

For more info, be sure to check out the official Level-X website at <http://www.tokyo-photo-museum.or.jp/level-x/>. The exhibition runs until February 8th, so if you're going to be in Japan for any reason beforehand, be sure to go check it out! And bring us back some souvenirs while you're at it.



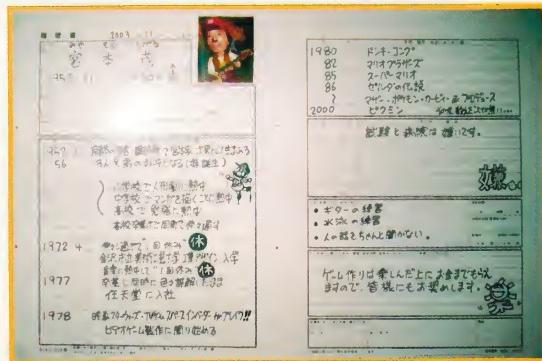
► If you're unmoved by this then you're clearly missing a respect gland: it's the ORIGINAL PIXEL ART for *Donkey Kong* by Shigeru Miyamoto



► The last Famicom that rolled off the production line. On loan from Nintendo Japan



► Look at that! The super-rare first Famicom with the square joypad buttons. They are worth serious coin





► It'd be no fun if you couldn't play the games... but you can

► A who's who of console history... hang on, there's been a mistake – where's the Amstrad GX4000?!



► Some random men playing Xevious on a giant projector



► Every single NES game. 1,200, boxed and in mint condition



► The Famicom keyboard looks like the old Commodore 64. Trust us

► Get that man out of there! He'll suffocate! There's no air! Oh, it's R.O.B.



FAMICOM ALARM CLOCK

Words cannot describe our lust for this, the hottest UFO Catcher prize to come along since the famous Princess Peach designer lingerie series of 1988*. Ladies and gentlemen, we present to you: the Famicom Alarm Clock! The clock comes in two flavours: *Mario Bros.* and *Super Mario Bros.*, each with its own unique theme using the coin sounds from the Mario games. Could you honestly ask for a better way to start the day?



► Sweet Lord! That's one of those grabber machines. Compare it with the ones WE have, full of fake Pikachus with black cheeks...



Nintendo
ファミコン型アラームクロック

► And there it is close up. The mighty Famicom alarm clock. Imagine being woken up by the original Mario music...

Gashapon Attack!!

In honour of all the Famicom happenings this month, we bring you Famicom gashapon! Each version of the classic 8-bit hardware is intricately detailed, featuring detachable cables and controllers and working cartridge slots. All this from a little plastic bubble! Not fair!

► They're cheap, almost impossible to break and don't use electricity!



Akihabara Watch

It's getting cold here in Tokyo, but that hasn't kept the schoolgirls from rushing out en masse to take on Nintendo and Namco's new musical sensation, *Donkey Konga* (1). If that's not weird enough for you, then check this out: recently, import shops have been popping up all over Japan to sell Japanese-developed games that get released first in America! Case in point: Atlus' *Double Dragon Advance* (2), which hit the US in November, but won't be arriving in Nippon until later this year. Crazy, eh? Believe it or not, the first *Advance Wars* still hasn't seen release over here. Now who's lucky? Yeah, it's still them...



► Japanese schoolgirls are the best – tests prove it



► Feel our Euro-gamer pain, Japanese man



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シークレット
バージョン
もあり！
センドミニの
ミニコンソール
のバージョン
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S P O T T E D !

SONIC TEAM'S YOJIRO OGAWA

During one of our routine Akihabara raids, we stumbled upon Yojiro Ogawa, director of *Phantasy Star Online Episode III* and one of Sonic Team's top dogs. It just so happens he was there for the launch of PSOIII, greeting fans and showing off his stylin' new Coat of Rappy Fur +2.



JAPAN TOP TEN

Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending December 14th

1	Mega Man Battle Network 4	(Capcom, GBA)
2	Mario Party 5	(Nintendo, GC)
3	One Piece Grand Battle! 3	(Bandai, GC)
4	Naruto: Gekitou Ninja Taisen! 2	(Tomy, GC)
5	Donkey Konga	(Nintendo, GC)
6	Pokémon Colosseum	(Nintendo, GC)
7	Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	(Nintendo, GC)
8	Kiniro no Gashbell!!!	(Banpresto, GBA)
9	Power Pro-kun Pocket 6	(Konami, GBA)
10	Donkey Kong Country	(Nintendo, GBA)

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Anolegos Dundcon

SUICIDAL SUPER SHOOTER!

PLAYED!

Shikigami No Shiro II

 A swarm of enemy craft shower half the screen with an insane wave of bullets. This'd usually be the point where you safeguard your ass and hide in a clear area. Not in *Shikigami*, though – you'll be charging directly into the action, twitching through the maze of plasma like a psycho with a death wish. Why? Moving your character in close proximity to enemy shots will power-up your guns. Of course!

Ride dangerously close to a bullet to make yourself glow a potent red, then let rip with your supercharged bad boys and vapourise everything that dared pop shots in your direction. Obliterate 30 of the diridies with magma-hot rapid-fire blasts. It will satisfy.

So what do you do? Prioritise short-term survival and run like a pansy? Or will you go Kamikaze and blast everything with hyper fire?

And then there are the special moves. Hold down the fire button to unleash a unique special power. Absorb bullets and launch them back at unsuspecting foes, summon a wizard to deal with enemies, or bust out some fat laser swords to swing around. They take time to charge and slow down your movement, but they're very powerful. Again, a tactical decision has to be made. No time to think, another 200 bullets incoming. This is real gaming. Can you cope?



**THAT'S
NOT
RIGHT!**

PC Genjin



This is the story of how a little bald man who goes crazy when he eats meat crushed our dreams. *PC Genjin* was the forgotten third horse in the bloody *Mario versus Sonic* console wars of the early 90s. His game system, the PC Engine, never saw a European release. This was to be his triumphant rebirth.

But the boss battles balls everything up. The day to day head butting is fine. You pad along stylised Yoshi's *Story*-esque stages, sticking your nut on all manner of little creatures. It's classic 2D gameplay. You can juggle enemies with headers and eat meat to go crazy. Genjin is an expressive little bloke, using his teeth to bite his way up walls and battle against the downward suck of quicksand.

Then, at the end of the second batch of stages, there's this... thing that completely annihilates you. It flies. It turns into a giant ninja star. It moves fast. It catches fire. Suddenly, Genjin's head butt attacks seem woefully underpowered. He can't run fast enough either. You lose reams of lives you had to hunt down fruit to build up. It feels broken.

And now, as a consequence, so do we. Broken on the inside. We dared to hope that this was going to be the game to make people remember how great 2D platform games were. It's only a budget release in Japan, but that's scant consolation. The torch of expectation passes to... *Astro Boy*. GO ON THE ASTRO BOY!!



Each expression was modelled on a NOM UK staffer's tortured game-face. Can you tell who's who? No, don't actually try it...



PLAYED!

Muscle Champion: Kinnikuzima No Kessen

**FLEXING
GAME
POWER!**

Forget the Olympics. Who cares if some overweight, hairy shot putter from Romania can throw over 20 metres or if the Americans win their 67th gold medal in the diving? What we need is golf ball driving, goal scoring and ball chucking. What we need are sports that aren't for wimps to make us proud to stand on top of the podium. That's what we need. Thankfully *Muscle Champion: Kinnikuzima No Kessen* has all this and more.

Muscle Champion is madder than a bucket of frogs. Brought to GameCube by Konami, think *Track & Field* on too much Lucozade and you'll have some idea what *Muscle Champion* is all about. You choose your athlete and from there you're thrown into an arena where it's a free-for-all to grab one of the 12 randomly dropped items including a golf club, goal or baseball and throw them onto the spinning platform in the centre. This chooses the event and the first to light all four medals wins.

Winning medals is simple. Win races, get more points than your opponents, that kind of thing, but it's the way you have to win that makes all the difference. Fail to keep button-bashing rhythm in the running and you'll be all over the place like Mike at the *NOM UK* Christmas party. If you don't get on the end of crosses in the footy you'll keep hitting the woodwork. Fail to catch the tiddlers in the fishing and there's no way the daddies are going to take a bite.

There are no *Track & Field* games on GameCube – which is a travesty, even if it would have knackered our pads – but to see this kind of mental sports game on Nintendo can only raise a smile. Mario's done tennis and golf, maybe footy and athletics are just around the corner...





**SLIMEY
HEAPS
OF FUN!**

PLAYED!

Slime Mori-Mori Dragon Quest



In Japan, *Dragon Quest* is huge. Bigger than *Final Fantasy*, bigger than *Zelda*, bigger even than *Mario*. And the character that represents *Dragon Quest* for the millions of kawaii-crazy fans is the Slime, the first enemy you meet in each game.

Square Enix sells plush Slimes by the cart-load – any major Japanese arcade will have a crane machine filled up with the little terrors. And now the little blue guy's star power has been realised in his first-ever starring role – *Slime Mori-Mori Dragon Quest* for the GBA (for Mori-Mori, just think "heaps and heaps"). Everything is peaceful in the Slime village until a group of evil platypus-looking guys invade. They destroy the village and kidnap all of its inhabitants. Only our hero remains to save the day.

It's all based on the fact that he's, well, a slime and therefore highly deformable. Tapping **A** makes him jump; tapping it again flattens him out so he can ride the wind a bit. Holding down **A** and any one of eight directions makes him stretch out. Let **A** go and he snaps in that direction, rolling towards (and destroying) anything in his way. The longer you charge him, the more bounce he'll have. Press **A** while standing on sand to burrow underground.

Bounce into enemies and you'll knock them out. While they're bouncing around you can scoot under them and catch them on Slime's head. Now he's got a weapon and he can throw the enemy at anything nearby by pressing **B**. Bounce a few more enemies around and you can stack up to three of them on your head at once, walking about with a giant tower of stuff on your bonce. Rescue your friends and they'll jump on your head, too; you can then choose to either return them to town or use them as ammo for a while. Awesome.

Have you won every



Thanks to Mark Kelly at Nintendo Database for permission to use these screenshots. Check out his site at www.planetnintendo.com for loads more Nintendo fun!

Melee trophy?

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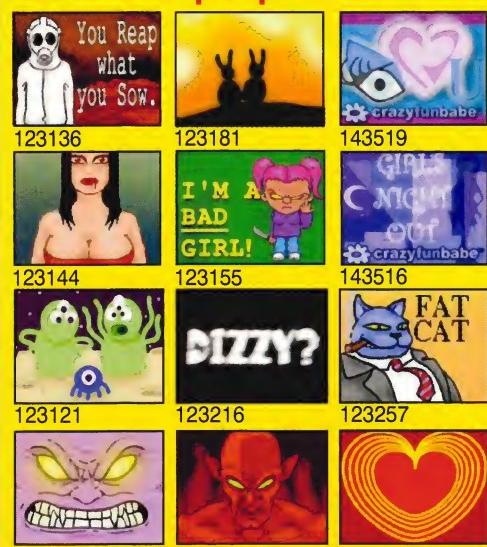
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Darkness - Christmas Time	143532	144229	Arsenal - Amazing Reds	122962	122963	Benny Hill	100013	108856	Xtm & Dj Chucky - On The Wings	116215	118500
Ozzy / Kelly Osbourne - Changes	144029	126069	Aston Villa - Holteenders In The Sky	122964	122965	Mash	-	108935	Lose Yourself - Eminem	108020	107810
Bo Selecta - Proper Crimbo	144339	144227	Aston Villa - Roll Along	122966	122967	Halloween	100048	109159	Bring Me To Life - Evanescence	110559	111603
The Idols - Happy Xmas	143533	144228	Chelsea - Blue Is The Colour	122984	122985	Good, Bad, Ugly	100689	108621	Clocks - Coldplay	108122	111125
Will Young - Leave Right Now	126492	126075	Chelsea - Super Franky Lampard	122986	122987	Mission Impossible	100142	107896	Simply The Best - Tina Turner	100802	120612
The Black Eyed Peas - Shut Up	143649	126726	Chelsea - We are the famous CFC	122988	122989	X Files	100160	109022	Fields Of Athenray - Celtic	100381	108273
Atomic Kitten - Ladies Night	144310	143466	Everton - He was Just 17 (Rooney)	122990	122991	Godfather	100884	108582	Great Escape	100382	123019
Shane Richie - I'm Your Man	143415	143335	Everton - You Are My Everton	122992	122993	Simpsons	102191	107052	Never Walk Alone - Liverpool	100378	123007
Sugababes - Too Lost In You	144346	143349	Leeds - We Had Joy	122998	122999	Deer Hunter	100752	109109	Dambusters	100703	118331
Blue - Signed, Sealed Delivered	144259	143347	Liverpool - You'll Never Walk Alone	123006	123007	Miami Vice	101308	109117	Glory Glory Man Utd	100493	108278
Ultrabeat - Feeling Fine	144307	143456	Liverpool - We All Live In A Red..	123008	123009	The Hulk	101155	109167	Heaven - Dj Sammy	102511	107808
Cliff Richard - Santa's List	143537	143345	Man City - Blue Moon	123012	123013	James Bond	100016	107023	Summer Jam 2003	122562	125124
Westlife - Mandy	126487	126078	Man United - Our Trophy Back	123016	123017	Rainbow	108193	108301	Scooby Doo	102302	107020
Cheeky Girls - Cheeky Christmas	144036	144037	Man United - The Great Escape	123018	123019	Muppets	100064	108209	Phoenix Nights	102796	107872
Outkast - Hey Ya!	125601	126010	Middlesborough - Boro Till I Die	123024	123025	Lord Of The Rings	101158	108715	Banana Splits	100804	108264
Katie Melua - Closest Thing To Crazy	143654	143661	Newcastle Utd - Blaydon Races	123026	123027	Dr Who	-	109127	Rocky IV Final Fight	101343	109230
Evanescence - My Immortal	144030	143471	Newcastle Utd - 1 Alan Shearer	123028	123029	Jaws	100764	109171	Knight Rider	100131	107030
UB40 - Swing Low	126393	125941	Southampton - Mr Eriksson	123034	123035	Terminator	101086	109255	Matrix	120822	107800
Girls Aloud - Jump	126491	126074	Southampton - When The Saints	123036	123037	Thunderbirds	100090	109258	Matrix Reloaded - Fluke	122608	126050
R n B	MONO	POLY	Glory Glory	123038	123039	Italian Job	100691	107026	DANCE	MONO	POLY
Ignition - R Kelly	116955	112674	Spurs - We Are Tottenham	123040	123041	Airwolf	100621	108213	Fly On The Wings Of - Xtm & Dj	116215	118500
In Da Club - 50 Cent	110152	111140	Wolves - King Kenny Miller	123042	123043	A Team	100682	107898	Make Luv - Room 5	111639	111643
21 Questions - 50 Cent	120396	120009	Wolves - Hey Jones 'E'	123044	123045	Braveheart	101154	108470	Weekend - Scooter	112641	112592
No Letting Go - Wayne Wonder	110352	120017	There's Only One....	123048	123049	Pulp Fiction	100695	108476	Children - Robert Miles	100111	108251
Know What U Want - Mariah/Busta	116187	117255	We've Got That Double Feeling	123052	123053	Star Wars	-	119735	Ur A Superstar - Love Inc	109977	107822
Favourite Things - Big Brovaz	116213	116949	Here We Go	123056	123057	Eye Of The Tiger	100687	108299	Rubberneckin - Elvis Presley	124657	124635
Rise & Fall - Craig & Sting	116196	116459	Match Of The Day	123058	123059	Axel F	100010	108195	Who Said - Planet Funk	122492	121696
Hot In Herre - Nelly	102133	108203	ROCKIN'	MONO	POLY	Jackass	102708	117260	All In My Head - Kosheen	121730	121533
Like I Love U - Justin Timberlake	107904	107860	Addicted to Love - RPalmer	111616	111514	Eastenders	100029	108388	Golden Path Chemical Brothers	124545	124338
Cant Nobody - Kelly Rowland	112602	116460	No Letting Go - Wayne Wonder	110352	120017	Friends	110615	108276	Husn Bhangra Knights Vs Husn	116956	116678
Mesmerize - Ja Rule & Ashanti	110349	111684	Loneliness - Tomcraft	112714	116463	War Of The Worlds	100758	109133	Loneliness Tomcraft	112714	116463
OLD SKOOL	MONO	POLY	Bring Me To Life - Evanescence	110559	111603	Raiders Of The Lost Ark	100126	109223	Hollywood Madonna	117377	121448
Let Me Be Your Fantasy - Baby D	-	116148	Layla - Eric Clapton	101345	108349	INDIE	MONO	POLY	Rhythm Is A Dancer 2003 Snap	116953	110493
Hanging On A String - Loose Ends	111755	111830	I Want To Break Free - Queen	100795	109755	Clocks - Coldplay	108122	112591	Lose This Feeling - Dannii Minogue	117371	120222
Gotta Have Your Love - Mantronix	111764	111839	Living On A Prayer - Guns N' Roses	101084	107012	The Scientist - Coldplay	116630	109056	Boys Of Summer - Dj Sammy	110321	110627
Cant Hide Ur Love - David Joseph	111734	111809	Final Countdown - Bon Jovi	101543	112307	7 Nation Army - White Stripes	116170	116168	Danger - Katie Underwood	N/A	125099
All Night Long - Mary Jane Girls	111779	111854	Highway To Hell - Ac Dc	116375	116376	Bitter Sweet Symphony - Verve	100097	108440	Wasted - Cam Farrar	N/A	125102
Kiss From A Rose - Seal	100078	108564	Come As You Are - Nirvana	116435	109060	Songbird - Oasis	110379	110430	Who Said - Planet Funk	122492	121696
Gonna Go My Way - Lenny Kravitz	-	109352	Hard Days Nitc - Beatles	100800	108806	Fools Gold - Stone Roses	101484	116984	Power Of Bhangra - Snap!	122538	N/A

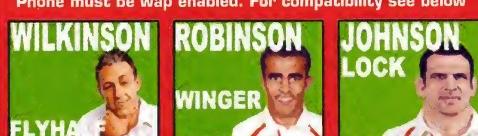
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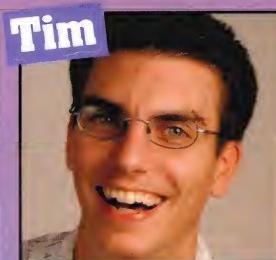
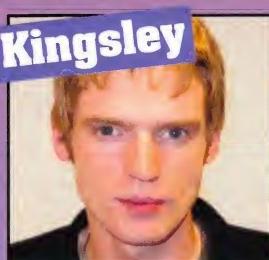
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Previews

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This month I've
been playing...

- Rogue Ops
- Mario & Luigi
- TG Rally
- 1080° Avalanche

This month I've
been playing...

- Astro Boy
- Sonic Heroes
- MoH: Infiltrator
- Kirby's Air Ride

This month I've
been playing...

- Metal Gear Solid
- MoH: Infiltrator
- NFL Street
- Tiger Woods 2004

This month I've
been playing...

- Mario & Luigi
- Mario Kart: DD
- Winning Eleven 6
- Donkey Konga

This month I've
been playing...

- Final Fantasy: CC
- Shikigami II
- Metroid Prime
- OoT: Bonus Disc



DONKEY KONGA

The rhythm king

DK's back, but it ain't no long-winded platformer...

At some point in life you'll be subjected to the conga. Mum, Dad, Auntie June, they'll all be in there giving it some pace after one too many sherries. You'll hate it. You'll cringe as they demand you join in. Round and round they'll go, like one big sherry-fuelled snake, crashing into tables, screaming like banshees and just when they think it's all over, the DJ will chuck on *The Birdie Song* and your nightmare will begin all over again.

But those thoughts are for another day. There's a Nintendo kinda conga for the here and now – *Donkey Konga* to be precise – the Namco-developed rhythm-action game that wipes its mucky feet on the dance mat and throws you a set of bongos.

For Nintendo fans, innovation is nothing new. The Big N gave the world Rumble Paks, Wavebirds, link cables and the Power Glove. But this kind of party game is certainly something new. A Disney dance mat game was set for N64, hell we even printed shots of it back in issue 98, but we've heard reports it got drunk with *Animal Crossing* and *Winning Eleven* on the boat from Japan and fell overboard. Ho hum.

So here's *Konga*, complete with a bunch of bananas on the disc and a UK release on the cards in the next few months. There's no word on whether the track list will change, but with Japanese anime shows featuring heavily we're hoping it will. After all you'd have to be pretty hardcore to know the theme tune to *Detective Boy*

Conan and *Galaxy Express 999*, though some of the J-Pop tunes will still be rattling around your head at 2am.

The entire game just lacks that Nintendo buzz you get when you're playing other A-list titles like *Wind Waker* and *Sunshine*. Diddy, Rambi and Cranky are here, but when the music plays their awkward animations look horrible. There are only two recognisable Nintendo tracks – the DK Rap from *DK64* and the *Super Mario Bros.* theme. Some cool sound clips (such as Mario's barrel leap in *DK*) are here, but where are the rest? WE WANTED MORE!

Believe us we wanted this to be the monkey's nuts when we first clapped eyes on it. We thought it would be rock hard, like the Expert mode in *DDR*, but even the hardest settings are too easy. So much so that when there are long breaks during tracks (and there are plenty) you'll be banging out your own rhythms even though it makes no difference to your final score. And that's where the problems lie. There are too many breaks and some tracks don't even work with a beat. One of the J-Pop tunes in particular sounds ridiculous as you try hitting the bongos to a beat that isn't there.

There are four ways to play the drums – left, right, together and clap. Claps must be done over the drums so it can be registered by the microphone





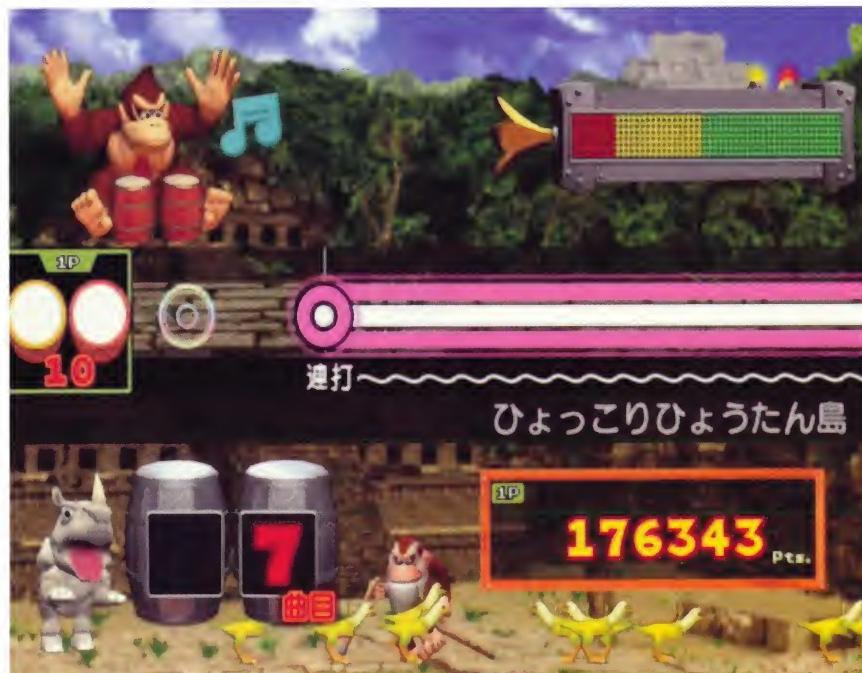
"The J-Pop tunes will rattle around your head until 2am."



Diddy tried shaking Donkey Kong from his trance caused by the cursed bongos



Even wise old Cranky Kong couldn't work out what the barrel was all about



Put dumb animals on the TV and make them entertain you – just like on Pop Idol

To the beat of the drum

There are four ways you can play Konga – hitting the left side, right side, both together or clapping/swearing/screaming. What you need to look out for though are the symbols that appear on screen, so follow us into the DK Jungle as we show you what to hit and when...



LEFT: That yellow chappy is your cue to give the left-side bongo a tap.



RIGHT: When the red ones appear give the right-hand side a monkey nudge.



TOGETHER: Look out for these cheeky pink ones, that's when you need to hit both.



CLAP: Watch out for the blue star and clap over the drums. If your Mum tells you to be quiet just tap the side of the bongos.



Preview

Bigger. Better. Smarter.



Before the bongos...

Namco have always been famed for their mad party games – remember *Point Blank* anyone?

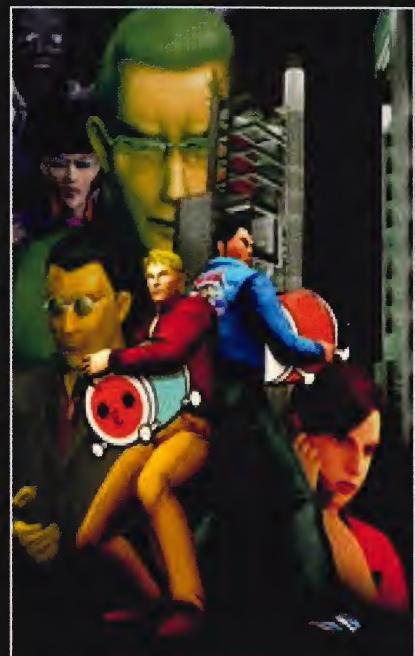
Before *Donkey Konga*, Namco made a drum game for the arcades called *Taiko no Tatsujin* (aka *Master of the Drum*) complete with massive drums and huge sticks. Five of these beasts were made, each with new tracks and eventually made their way onto

PS2. *Land of Hope and Glory*, the theme to *Jaws* and *Mr Driller* were just some of the tracks to appear in the original.

The iconic drum, complete with happy cartoon face, has since become a massive star in Japan. Toys have been made of him and he's even been a cameo star of made-up spin-offs of *Time Crisis* and *Mr Driller*. Check them out at www.namco.co.jp.



This is the kind of Japanese gaming genius we crave



The Best of Jungle, Vol. I

There are 32 tracks to drum along to. Some you'll know, others will make you wonder just how crazy Japanese TV shows are.

The final track list is still to be decided for UK gamers, but on the Japanese version you can bang along to themes from

Hamtarō, Pokémon and Doraemon.

If classics take your fancy then Mozart and Brahms have been included and for anyone who remembers that Nike ad kickabout in the airport, the Latin track *Mas Que Nada* is also in there.



A quick clap and those animals will go mad

sensor inside, but it can sense just about anything. If an opponent claps it'll register on your mic, knocking you off your rhythm.

Likewise with loud talking, which can be picked up over ten feet away. Swearing works a treat too, but you wouldn't see us doing it. Honest.

Donkey Konga has some great multiplayer modes that you should check out. During Battle mode, POW blocks appear, which, if struck on cue, will knock your opponent's score back to zero. Scoring high is your only objective and you'll need to rack up the combos. Hit the beat perfectly for a Good rating, next up is OK, then Bad and Miss. Lose the beat and you'll lose your combo. Then there's Memorisation mode with DK Barrels instead of coloured symbols rolling along the scales. You've just got to know what to hit and when.

Will multiple players be able to buy the bongos separately? Well, it happened in Japan, so we certainly hope so, but you can also use a GC pad to control Diddy or Donkey as they hammer away at the drums. It isn't as much fun, but it might save you some cash.

It's good to see DK back, but so far we're feeling let down. Maybe the proposed series of games will make it worthwhile in the long term, but the first edition is just not all it's cracked up to be. Your girlfriend is gonna love it, but for the rest of us the jury's still out.

Essentials

The developer: Namco
What it's done: *Taiko no Tatsujin*, *Taiko no Tatsujin Doki*, *Taiko no Tatsujin: Appare Sandaike*
Multiplayer: 1-4 players
Connectivity: no
The publishers: Nintendo
Release: TBC
Review: in a few months time, we reckon

Predicted score

It looks awesome, but after a few hours play we wondered what all the fuss was about. Maybe the future updates will improve this so-so title.

NOM UK Predicts

65%+

■ From what you've played what's the best moment?

Seeing retro Mario and DK at the start was sweet, but in-game we'd have to say that for Nintendo heads the *Super Mario Bros.* theme tune is the best toe tapper in there.

■ ...and the worst?

The tunes that have no need being here. Some tracks just don't have a natural beat and that can get extremely confusing. A lot of songs also have long breaks between notes, even on hard settings, defeating the object of a game like this.

■ When can we expect those extra track discs? WHEN?

Whoah! Hold on there! This hasn't even been released in the UK yet! And *Donkey Konga* isn't down for launch in the first half of the year, though that's subject to change of course. As for the extra tunes and content, according to Japanese magazine *Nintendo Dream* they are in the works and a Far Eastern release date has been confirmed for the spring. That means we'll get it in about 2015, if ever.

pixellated Mario and Donkey Kong that appear as the game boots up.

■ Do any other Nintendo stars make an appearance here?

There have been so many cool characters in the *Donkey Kong* games that you'd think it likely that some would pop up in *Donkey Konga*, but that's a no-go. The likes of Diddy and Rambi are here, but there's no sign of Enguarde or Pauline. What hardcore Nintendo fans will like though are the

■ Is it actually worth playing with a controller or are the drums essential to having a good time?

Not really. At least you can use a GameCube controller to save burning a whole in your pocket, but when you've got a mate banging away on the drums while you press buttons it just takes the fun out of the whole thing.

■ Does it matter what part of the bongos you hit as long as it's on the top?

No it doesn't. Unlike *Taiko no Tatsujin* where you have to hit the rim of the



Trust me, I've played it

I've got two left feet when it comes to dance mat games, but *Samba de Amigo* was awesome and when I first saw *Donkey Konga* I thought it was going to be a winner. Wrong! It's hard to say it, but *Konga* is one of the biggest let downs on GameCube – maybe the new track discs will save it.

JAMES BOND IN... EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

Just when EA's first-person Bond franchise was getting good, the powers that be decide it's time for a change. No more are you trapped behind Bond's eyes, now you have the opportunity to control 007 in the third person. Luckily, this switch hasn't done anything to harm Bond – *Everything or Nothing* still has all the elements of style we've come to expect; and a lot more besides.



Oh, James...

The camera may have moved, but Bond still has all the right moves. His taste in women isn't bad either.

And it's clear that no expense has been spared in the presentation of this game. We know that EA is renowned for its lavish intro movies and star endorsements but, *Everything or Nothing* rewrites the book. The opening movie is the epitome of the 007 style we know and love with swooping camera movements, gorgeous silhouetted naked ladies and an original Bond theme tune. As the names of the characters flash up on screen you might forget you're playing a video game and not a watching DVD.

But we know you're not the sort to be wowed by the flashy packaging if what's inside smells like a rotten tomato. Thankfully the gameplay is solid; not spectacular as this is still only a preview version of the game, but everything looks like it's shaping up to be a thoroughly enjoyable experience.



The myopic guard couldn't read James' watch

The opening level, A Long Way Down, sees Bond escaping from a blazing building using his Rappel wire. After making your way down the first part of the tower you have to pop a couple of guards, drop an explosive charge down a ventilation pipe and continue your descent. The controls feel good. The game plays more like a First Person Shooter than an action adventure and it's easy to lock-on and shoot targets using the shoulder buttons. After a brief detour to shut off a gas valve and take out a few more goons you make it to the ground where you're treated to the first of many highly polished cut-scenes bringing the Hollywood-style story line to life.

But Bond isn't content with simply snooping around on foot and there's a fair selection of driving elements to the adventure as well. These have been worked on by the team responsible for *Need for Speed* and it really shows as the cars and bikes handle well and move at an alarming pace. We got our hands on a rally car, Triumph Daytona motorbike and Bond's trademark Aston Martin Vanquish as we burnt some rubber over a variety of different stages.

If gameplay comes second on your list of priorities behind 'things to impress your mates' then *EoN* has that covered as well. The character models are excellent. Bond, M, Q and the host of other sidekicks and bit-part players look almost lifelike. Brosnan himself is as close as you'll get to



Even in paperboy disguise, Bond drew heat



James field-tests Q's new car-resistant shoes



Come on, 007, even we're stealthier than that

Taking to the skies

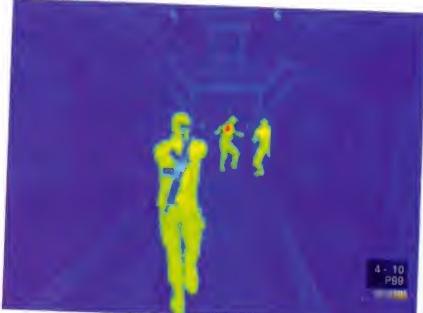
Alongside the sports cars, bikes and other land-based vehicles that Bond commandeers, you'll also get the chance to pilot a helicopter through the mountains of Egypt.

In the Sand Storm level you must chase The General (his parents clearly didn't try too hard) to his secret base avoiding the masses of



missiles and bombs that come your way. You'll also need to look out for falling rocks, collapsing scenery and narrow spaces that you have to squeeze through at speed. It's a thrilling pursuit and another example of EA trying new things, which is always good to see.

"Everything or Nothing is worthy of carrying the James Bond tag."



the real thing, even better looking than in last-year's *Nightfire*. Decent animation adds to the sense of realism with a wide variety of moves, clever touches and convincing deaths adding up to make you believe you're inside the latest *Bond* movie.

Everything or Nothing is certainly worthy of carrying the James Bond tag. EA has done well to alter the style of the action without harming the gameplay in any way. And bringing in the *Need for Speed* team to overhaul the driving sections is a welcome step – and the sort of collaboration we hope to see more of in the future.



Next Objective: avoid bullets connecting with face

- **What's your favourite bit?**
I'm just glad to see that the switch to third person hasn't ruined what was shaping up to be a good franchise. If anything it has enhanced certain elements of the game.
- **... and the worst bit?**
At the moment the controls are merely alright, but the item-selection process is seriously frustrating and you don't want to be fiddling through your inventory when a soldier has a large, loaded gun to your face. This definitely needs to be improved or it could hamstring the entire game.

- **If I want a driver I'll buy one!**

That's a fair point, but this is not the first game to try and incorporate several styles of gameplay into one game. The way we see it, if you want to add driving sections to a 3D action adventure then you should at least consult some people who know a bit about driving games before you start.

- **So are the driving bits good?**

Yes they are, not quite as good as *Need for Speed* or any other decent, dedicated driving title, but they're more than competent. The motorcycle is especially fun with a tremendous sense of speed.

- **Is it still stealthy?**

More than it was in the past. As well as the usual all-guns-blazing approach you can take time to find disguises, look for alternative routes into buildings or use diversionary tactics to help you out. It's no *Splinter Cell*, but it's a welcome touch of subtlety.

- **Does it offer anything new?**

Not really. There's not a lot here that we haven't seen before, but EA has certainly gone a step further, especially in the presentation. The collaboration with the *Need for Speed* team is definitely something we approve of.

- **Who's in it that you know of?**

Pierce Brosnan, Shannen Elizabeth, Heidi Klum, Willem Dafoe, Dame Judi Dench, Mya and John Cleese. It really reads like the opening to a brand-new *Bond* movie. And it looks like one, too.

- **Are they just supplying voices?**

No, they provide everything; voices, faces and bodies, like virtual actors. Occasionally the bodies look a bit rubbish – Heidi Klum in a helicopter pilot's outfit makes her look like she's pregnant, but facially everyone's as near to the real thing as they're ever likely to be on GameCube.



Trust me, I've played it

Essentials

The developer: EA
What it's done: *Need for Speed: Underground* (issue 135, 82%), *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* (issue 136, 68%), *SSX 3* (issue 135, 86%)
Multiplayer: 1-4
Connectivity: yes, a GBA tracking device
The publisher: EA
Release: February 20th
Review: next issue

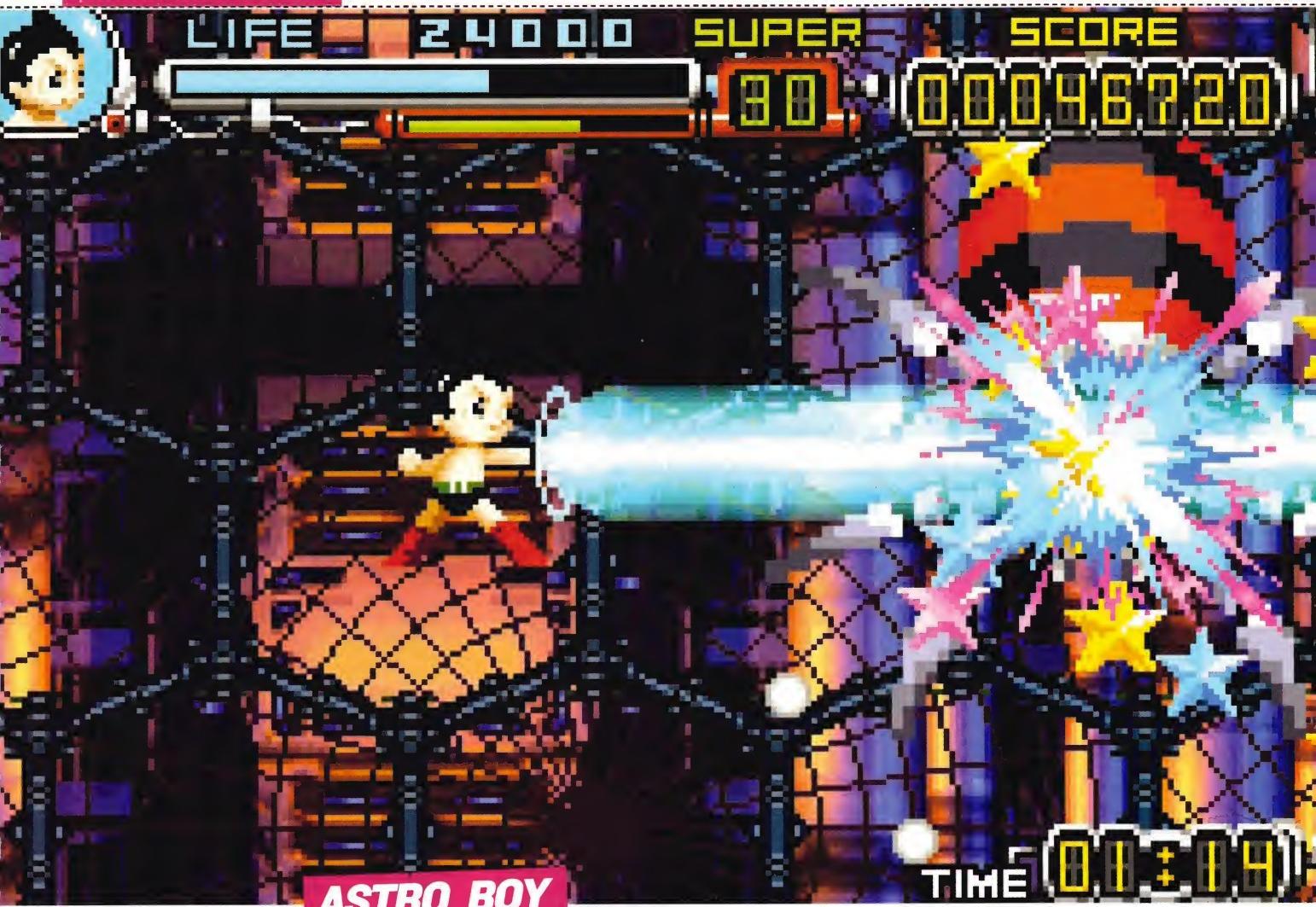
Predicted score

There's presentation enough to impress any hardened gamer, but it's got substance, too. The story is strong, the gameplay is tidy and the driving sections add an injection of pace at just the right moments.

NOM UK Predicts

75%+

I liked *Nightfire* and was a little worried that the switch to third person might ruin a tried-and-tested Bond formula, but this has really dispelled my fears. It's not perfect yet, but the usual post-production spit and polish should make this a really enjoyable title.



ASTRO BOY

Wonder Boy

Sega's 2D marvel blasts in to save us from polygons.

Something strange happened. We switched on the GBA with this in the slot, and, instead of making that twinkling noise as the Game Boy letters fluttered onto the screen, it squealed "Thank God!". Putting '3D' games into a GBA is like filling a petrol car with diesel. But today, we'd squirted in high-octane four-star power juice.

Astro Boy is a blast from the past. A purer time when people quoted 'bits' at each other like they knew what they were talking about. It's half side-scrolling action game and half shooter. We'll deal with that first half first.

He might look like a child, but Astro Boy is hard as nails. He's got a ferocious punch, a spinning kick to rock you backwards onto your ass and an arm that shoots a cutting beam of laser. He can unleash a fatter beam as a special and, weirdly, do a little dance where he shakes his ass and machine gun fire sprays out. Dugga-dugga-dugga.

He needs all this, since as soon as he steps rightwards and the screen scrolls, it all kicks off. A pack of Bomberman-style robots come scuttling in to brawl and shoot bullets. So you wade in, booting them across the screen and





"He might look like a child, but Astro Boy is hard as nails."

roasting their circuits with amplified light. Next up, mini-me versions of them pile in. Much harder to hit. Then some four times the size. Loads of them. You've really got to hit and dodge to prevent your power meter plunging.

Luckily, you can get out of their way pretty quick. You can't duck, but you can blast upwards or sideways with the rocket boosters in your dinky red boots, helping with tricky-to-reach platforms.

Because the boy can fly, they've thrown in some side-scrolling shoot-'em-up action as well. Some of the stages are straight left-to-right flying affairs. You take down waves of enemies with your fierce laser, dodging the incoming fire that fills the screen like confetti at a wedding. There's a touch of slow-down here and there, but you might just welcome that as you're

trying to pick a safe path through the fire.

You'll also meet bosses in airborne situations. You use your boosters to zap into safe areas of the screen, fire off the fattest lasers you have, then find another safe area. The bosses, on the whole, fill the GBA's modest screen. Giant lumbering mecha-spiders, armoured trains, big blob things with tentacles – it's all good. Trickier are those the same size as you, who typically combine lightning speed with the firepower of, ooh, the US army.

That's where strategic powering-up is essential. Every time you slay a boss or rescue somebody, they give you a tech upgrade. You can spend it on wider laser beams, more health, better boosters, whatever. Oh and the graphics are cracking – almost forgot to mention that. It's as if there were more important things to worry about...

- **What's the best bit, then?**
Just the fact that it exists. That a really top-grade original action platform game can still be born in this day and age. It's unconcerned with trying to be a film and obsessed with feeding you more action than you can handle.

- **...and the worst bit?**
When you call on your special weapons, there's a pause as Astro Boy readies his most powerful blast. Given that some of the bosses require a pretty much constant barrage of special fire to damage them, it slows the exhilaration to a bit of a stammer.

against the gleaming war machinery trying to tear him asunder. Anyway, his arm folds down into a powerful beam cannon. It's all based on a Japanese comic that's been running since the 1950s, so they couldn't just give him reflective laser armour and that. The quiet nation of Japan would've erupted in civil unrest.

- **Random people power you up?**
Of course. But not until Astro Boy has filed them in this crazy hexagonal grid thing according to how much he trusts them. Happiness is a full grid, adding a *Pokémon* collect-em-up vibe.

- **Sounds pretty old skool...**
That's exactly the appeal. You can drop in, blast away and not have to think much. Just react and fall back on your innate ninja games skills. Oh, and marvel at the genius bosses and polished-to-a-shine 2D gameplay. It's exactly the sort of thing Treasure used to knock out on the Sega Mega Drive (*think Gunstar Heroes*), and clearly they still have the magic.

- **But he's a hero in... pants and red booties?**
Yeah, that is a bit weird. But it gives him character and he stands out



Confused? The word you are looking for is BZZACK!



Big green dudes: smash them up bad. They like it

Essentials

The developer: The mighty Treasure, ladies and gents

What it's done: *Ikaruga*, *Wario World*, *Gunstar Heroes*, *Bangai-O*... beautiful

Multiplayer: Not that we could see

Connectivity: nah – the 3D game is for PS2 only

The publishers: Sega

Release: not yet confirmed for a UK release

Review: see above... and lobby THQ to pick this up

Predicted score

One of our favourite GBA games ever. Like Konami's criminally ignored *Ninja Cop* (buy it), it takes old-skool action values to a new high.

NOM UK Predicts **85%+**



Trust me, I've played it

Actually, maybe you shouldn't trust me. I'm a maniac for quality 2D action games. The first time I saw a pic of Astro Boy in his pants and red boots mashing robots up with a fat laser, I fell in love. Factor in that it's been coded by Treasure (*Ikaruga*, *Wario World*) under the supervision of Sega Hitmaker

Essentials

(*Virtua Tennis*) and you have *The Game That Cannot Fail To Impress* Dean Scott. I love it like it came from inside my own body.

So, what's the story?

Story? Ha, ha. How 3D games have polluted your mind. Actually there's a lot of Japanese text, but whatever's being said can't make the gameplay any more immediate. You're a little guy. You can kick, punch, blast a laser and fire machine gun bullets out of your ass. Things arrive on the screen and you end them. Lasers blaze and little coloured stars fly everywhere.



RUMBLE

That's great, Snake,
but someone's going
to have to clean this
lot up aren't they?



FIREING

**METAL GEAR SOLID:
THE TWIN SNAKES**

We blow Solid's cover with a near-final version of *The Twin Snakes*...



One false move and it's into the custard –
try explaining that to Mrs Snake



Snake donned the X-Ray goggles
and waited for ladies to walk by

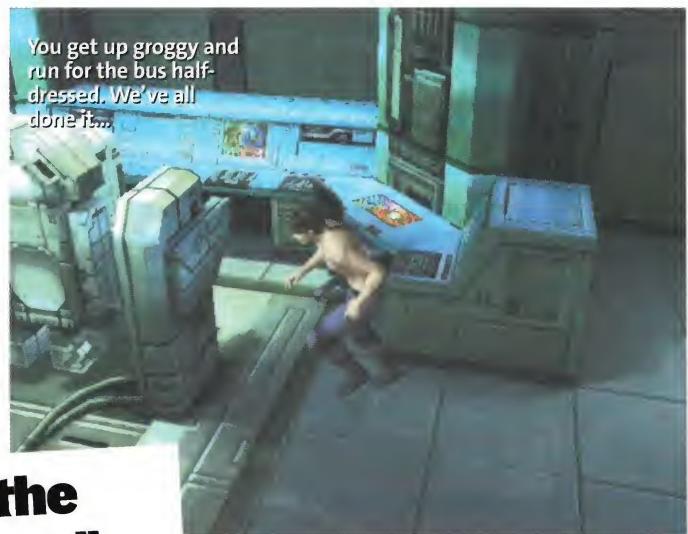


This is special. We always thought that it would be. But now we're holding a near-finished version of *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* in our hands we finally have confirmation. This is very special. And if you were thinking that all we were getting was a PSone game with a face-lift then it's time to think again. It's as good as brand new.

The most obvious change from *Metal Gear Solid* is in the graphics. In the original game, Snake didn't have a face, just a few polygons masquerading as a head with some lines drawn on as features. Now Snake's emotions are conveyed in fine detail – you can even see the stubble on his sneaky chin. Everywhere you look there's something intricate and interesting to see. The portraits of the game's developers hanging on the wall when you face Psycho Mantis, the grot mag that you find in one of the toilet cubicles, even the GameCube with WaveBird and loading screen on the television that sits in Otacon's lab. Little things that add up to make a world of difference to your environment.

And these subtleties also affect the gameplay. Snake no longer walks through dead bodies at full speed; he gently steps over them. If you select a grenade from your inventory you can vary the distance you throw it by holding the A button for a greater length of time. There's also a large selection of destroyable scenery; glass panels, computers, fire extinguishers, all can be mutilated with a well-aimed bullet or fist.

To complement his upgraded surroundings, Snake has been given a selection of new moves, borrowed from *Sons of Liberty*, so that you can be sneakier than before. The most useful is the first-person view. Snake's vision is no longer confined to a top-down



"You're looking at one of the very best games of the year."



You've been in the army that long eh, Snakey?



It's just one part of Snake's formidable arsenal



scan of the locations, now you can see the world through Snake's eyes. The most practical application for this is when you're firing a weapon. Seeing the whites of your enemy's eyes before you give them a third nostril is far more satisfying than simply filling their dumb bodies with hot lead.

The other major addition to Snake's repertoire is the Ledge Hang manoeuvre. If an enemy gets too close for comfort and there's nowhere for Snake to hide, you can run up to a set of railings, hit the action button and leap over the side. A Grip Meter appears to tell you how long you can remain in your hiding place. It's certainly a desperation tactic, but it's unbelievably cool.

As Snake has grown smarter, so have his enemies. The Genome soldiers that patrol the Alaskan base are far more sensitive to your movements than before. If you decide to run along





a metal gantry, any guards standing beneath you will pick up the clank-clank of your boots and come to find you. What's more, if you're quick enough to kill an enemy then you better have a good place to hide the body as any stiffs left lying around will be discovered by the rest of the patrol and your presence will be detected.

The enemies' pursuit is relentless. Once you're detected then you need to run and hide as quick as you can. To make matters worse the guards go into Alert mode and your radar becomes jammed, leaving you blind. If you manage to escape their attention for long enough then Alert mode switches to Evasion mode. Keep a low profile for a few more seconds and your radar screen will return although the guards will still be more alert to any sounds or movements than before.

Hideo Kojima is renowned for creating games with a hugely cinematic vibe and now he has the power of GameCube at his disposal along with the expert Silicon Knights development team pulling the strings. *Twin Snakes* has moved the story up a few dozen notches. All of the original cast have returned to voice the characters and while the majority of the script remains



"It's already clear that *MGS: The Twin Snakes* is going to be the classic we were all expecting."





Psycho couldn't hold back the tears when the paintings started laughing at his costume



Big bits of fiendishly powerful military kit – that's what we like to see in a game...



What's in Meryl's Christmas present from Mantis? It's a lovely new gas mask!



The Christmas party game of Pictionary goes all wrong

unchanged there are some noticeable new pieces of dialogue for fans to spot.

Better than this is the creation of a wealth of new cut-scenes and additions to the originals. The first meeting between Snake and Stealth Ninja, after the first boss battle, is excellent; sparks fly as the two jump and kick their way around the confined space before reaching a 'you kill me, I kill you' stand off. It could be argued that the cut-scenes go on a bit (the story line is nothing if not ambitious) and we found ourselves skipping through a few of the talky bits just to get back into the action. But whichever side of the fence you fall on, you can't deny that the revamped cinematics look awesome.

We'll be bringing you the first full PAL review of *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* next month, but it's already clear that this is going to be the classic we all imagined. Far from a simple remake with new graphics, *The Twin Snakes* is a brand-new game, make no mistake. Even hardcore fans of the original will find something new here and if you haven't played a *Metal Gear* game before then you're definitely in for a treat.



This is the latest in stubborn chest hair removal

Essentials

The developer: Silicon Knights/Hideo Kojima
What it's done: SK created the GameCube masterpiece *Eternal Darkness* and Hideo Kojima is responsible for *Metal Gear Solid* and *Sons of Liberty*, as well as some stylish ZOE titles on PS2.

Multiplayer: no

Connectivity: it was initially rumoured to be included, but apparently now it's not

The publisher: Konami

Release: March 2004

Review: next month.

Exclusive: Ba-bosh!

Predicted score

A masterwork in the making. When this is fully finished it'll become an instant classic and a definite must-have title. We're sure of that.

NOM UK
Predicts

85%+

- **What's the best bit?**
For a *Metal Gear* fan like myself it's seeing the game as it was meant to be. Everything looks so much more realistic and it's much more of a challenge than ever before.

- **... and the worst?**

There are still a few teething problems with the controls. Dare I say that it's not quite as user-friendly as the PSone version? What's more, if you like your games to have a steady flow of action then the huge cinematic sequences are really going to hack you off. You may need a pillow at hand.

- **Have the VR training missions made it into this version?**
Sadly no – they were never an essential part of the game, but if it would have been nice to have them included, if only for posterity.

- **Any other little gaming differences?**

Most evident is that when Snake gets attacked and you don't have the Rations to heal him, he bleeds. If you don't find some food or a bandage then the bleeding continues and your health drains pretty rapidly. It's an element of realism that again adds to the atmosphere of the adventure.

In places it is. It's not so bad in the cut-scenes because at least there's some visual stimulation, but the intercom (CODEC) sections between Snake and his back-up team can drag on, especially when everyone starts filling you in on their family history.

- **What little extra bits are in there?**
There are some quite cool titbits that really increase the wow factor. For starters you can now watch Snake's initial briefing through archived CCTV footage, zooming in on any points of interest. Definitely something for the die-hards.

- **So, the story line is the same?**
Essentially yes. There are loads of new cut-scenes and a smattering of new dialogue, but the basic premise is that

Snake is dropped into a terrorist hideout in Alaska with the task of locating a stolen nuclear warhead, finding some US military top brass and uncovering the leader of the FOXHOUND organisation.

- ***Sons of Liberty* was criticised for being too wordy, is this the same?**



Trust
me, I've
played it

I'm a massive *Metal Gear* fan and I've played the original PSone title more times than I care to remember, so I was ecstatic at the prospect of this. But what struck me is just how different this remake is, it's certainly a lot tougher and much more stealth-orientated. I've a feeling that my days



BATEN KAITOS

Baten down the hatches

Namco swoops in with another GC-exclusive RPG, this time set amidst the clouds. Come fly with us...

A hush fell over the Tokyo crowd. They'd assembled there in the Yebisu Garden Hall, not only journalists like us, but lucky members of the (Japanese) public who'd won tickets, to witness the unveiling of Monolith Soft's *Baten Kaitos*. How's this for a dream team of RPG luminaries: *Chrono Cross* director and writer Masato Kato would be providing the story; art director Yasuyuki Honne would bring with him his colourful, vivid style; and super-composer Motoi Sakuraba (*Tales of Symphonia*, *Shining Force* and *Golden Sun*) would score the game.

"What we want you to understand", said the speaker on stage, "is that although it looks like a card RPG, it's really not." Strong words. And after our playtime with *Baten Kaitos*, we can confirm that they're not lying. It's fun and not nearly as maths-oriented as you might imagine.

Basically, *Baten Kaitos'* battle system does use cards – called Magnus – to attack and defend.



Eeeek! That medieval Kat Slater is giving us the eye!



"You'll lose bladder control when you see the environments."

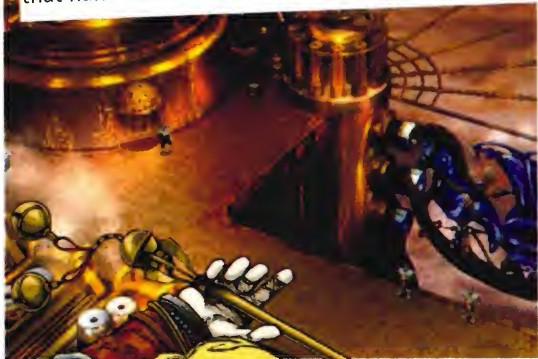


Something very important yet strangely mystifying is going on here

No matter how many sparkley lighting effects we see, we never get tired

But even if you do not pay attention to the numbers on the Magnus, you can win battles just by picking weapon cards to attack with, heal cards to heal with, and using armour cards when the enemy attacks you. Cards are randomly drawn from a deck that you can arrange yourself on the traditional status screen. Want to get a little more complex? Magic spells and other such cards have colours and if you defend against them with the opposite colour, you'll defend better or even block the damage entirely. Fire beats water, wind beats time, light beats dark and so on. Easy, cheesy, Japanesey.

Now, about those numbers. Don't worry, you don't even have to know basic maths to do this – you just need to be able to play Poker. You can use two or more cards per turn to attack. Use two threes and you'll get a 10% damage bonus for your pair. Use a three and a four and you've got a straight – 13% bonus. Do this with longer combinations and the bonus shoots up. And yes, it works for healing too – and defence. See those Magnus with more than one number on them? You can select which number you want to use for that hand with the C-Stick. Simple as that.



This boy/girl sure looks good/bad in his/her clothes... crazy!

Restorative items come in card form, and quest items, like apples that you can give to a whiny little girl in town, for instance, aren't just carried around in your pocket... you absorb the item's Magna Essence, which is transferred to a Blank Magnus, then use the C-Stick to access it. There are only a few blanks, of course, so you have to make hard choices.

Everything else in *Baten* is pretty traditional stuff. The major differences are that although Experience Points are still gained in battles, levelling up is done in a church. You can also raise your character's class by using hidden items; a higher class means more space in your deck, but less time to attack before your turn ends. Oh, and you make money by taking pictures of enemies and selling them at shops, using a special Camera Magnus, of course.

Sakuraba's score is one of the most beautiful soundtracks on GameCube. Both the relaxing New Age town themes and butt-kicking battle music are so memorable that you'll be humming them long after you turn the power off. Honne's incredible artwork is literally given centre stage in *Baten*; you'll lose your bladder control when you see the environments and map screens up close.



Sometimes Japanese games make our brains feel funny

Essentials

The developers: Monolith Soft

What it's done: *Xenosaga Episode 1* (PS2), although the top dogs on this also headed up *Chrono Cross* (PSone)

Multiplayer: not needed

Connectivity: unnecessary

The publisher: will be Namco, unless another interested party picks it up outside of Japan

Release: only Japan, until further notice

Review: Slow down, pal! Just look at the pretty pictures...

Predicted score

Not just a by-the-numbers RPG, *Baten Kaitos* contains some surprisingly tasty twists on the standard turn-based gameplay, not to mention remarkably pretty graphics and music.

NOM UK
Predicts

80%+

■ Best part of the game?
This is the first Motoi Sakuraba soundtrack that I truly love. It's better than *Symphonia*, it's better than *Golden Sun*. That's not to take anything away from the graphics or the gameplay, but I seek out new levels just to hear the new music. That should count for something.

■ ...and the worst?
While the pre-rendered backgrounds are jaw-droppingly pretty, it means that we never see any sort of detail on the characters' faces or anything else because the camera never zooms in.

being timed – go too slow and you'll miss a card or your entire turn. That goes double for defence – you have to select armour cards to lessen damage.

■ Wait a sec... attack cards, healing cards, and defence cards? How many can I put in my deck, and what if they don't pop up?

You do need to balance your deck out. Some weapons can be used defensively, but you'll definitely want dedicated armour cards and a few healing items. Your deck is small – 20 cards to start out – which means all of your cards will come up pretty quickly.

can draw three-of-a-kinds or straights then you get even more extra damage. And of course this applies to healing items as well, although it's tougher to come across healing cards that have identical or sequential numbers.

■ Sounds like a slow, plodding battle system where you have to stare at your hand and crunch all the possible number combinations... right?

Wrong. Not only do you only have a few cards in your hand at any given time (and can thus immediately see all of your options if you're not an idiot), you have to move fast because you're

when I picked up *Baten Kaitos* and started to play...

■ Yeah, screw this 'card RPG' rubbish. I'm outta here.

No, hold on! What I was going to say is that it's clear that the card-RPG motif doesn't make *Baten Kaitos* into an impenetrably brain-racking maths puzzle. Indeed, if you can play Poker, that's all you need to know to understand BK's card battle system.

■ That doesn't sound like a lot.
It's not, but later you get to draw three cards or more per attack. And if you



Trust me, I've played it

I'll be the first to admit that on seeing the first videos of *Baten Kaitos* – after my initial lust for its beautiful graphic style – I could feel the bottom drop out of my stomach – it looked like a card RPG. Historically, cards in video games and I have not gotten along, ever since that garbage in *Final Fantasy VIII*. But



Goblindegook

With a title as rubbish as that this is either rampant tripe or pure genius. Thankfully, the second option looks more likely.



It looks hectic to say the least, like *NOM UK* towers the day after our Christmas bash



Don't look into the light, large cave troll-type dude, we reckon it'll mess you up bad



Go build your own ladder, you bunch of goblin freeloaders – and stop trying to sell us pegs



This ain't *The Wizard of Oz* you 'orrible lot. Quit your singin' and get back to killin'

GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE

What's cooler? Commanding fleets of tooled-up interstellar spacecraft and battling for domination of the galaxy, or sending a bunch of remedial trolls and goblins into skirmishes with other equally orcish abominations? We'd go for space and science over goblins any day, but we have to work with what the publishers send us. Given the lack of any decent *Star Wars* real-time strategy games gracing GameCube in this or any other reality, we'll all just have to settle for looking after the pot-bellied uglies in *Goblin Commander*.

Despite the sub-Tolkien plot nonsense, the game scores immediate bonus points just for existing in the first place. While turn-based strategy titles like *Advance Wars* and *FF Tactics* have found comfy new homes on Game Boy Advance recently, the real-time strategy game is probably the rarest title found on consoles. The few attempts that have appeared have been cack ports of deathly dull 'historically accurate' PC titles (learning AND playing? Oh how you spoil us). Thank the Dark Lords and the Wyvern beasts they ride upon then for *Goblin Commander*, an RTS designed specifically to be played on your telly with a joypad – and for pure fun.

Generally you have one main mission: destroy and assimilate everything in your path until you rule the entire game map. You must choose which goblin clans you want on your side at the start of each mission. Each of the five groups has the different strengths and weaknesses you'd expect. The Stormbringers, for instance aren't all that tough, but are formidable magic casters, while the Hellfire clan in comparison are wee nippies better suited to ranged attacks and demolishing enemy strongholds from a safe distance.

There are further differences between the individual units within each clan. Some are good for stealthy scouting, others for battling or standing guard. Each clan can only hold a maximum of ten

Simple enough for you, Bozo

Controlling your army couldn't be simpler. Clans are automatically grouped and to switch between them or tell them to advance, hold down the shoulder button and then press the corresponding direction on the D-Pad. To select more than one group or issue more orders, just press extra directions. You can mark patrol routes on the map with a couple of simple presses and the whole thing is so effortless you'll be commanding an unholy horde in just a few clicks of your fingers.





I don't think we're in Kansas any more, Toto



It looks kind of dicey for the little red guys



Cedric the goblin never hung with the usual crowd. He opted to branch out on his own

individual units however, with a maximum of four clans at your disposal in any mission. It's not a lot to command when facing the hordes of Hades and this is where *Goblin Commander* has the potential to twinkle. Rather than focusing on the usual RTS philosophies of "strength in numbers" and "biggest army wins", by limiting your resources the game forces you to look after each and every unit. No goblin is expendable as you fight the good fight and you can't spend ages forming a massive army then steaming in to swamp your enemy. You even start to feel bad for your little dudes when they're suffering in battle.

Helping you get more up close and personal with your troops is the ability to zap yourself into the bloated bodies of individual goblins. When possessed you can then heal up by making them nosh on enemies, or activate their most powerful attacks. You can even scout around the map as a rogue soldier while your brothers in arms carry out their orders. The result is an enemy force confused by your tactics and left vulnerable.

Goblin Commander looks like a surprisingly decent game that's pitched for the non-RTS fan to get into with ease. It's looking like the best attempt at a console real-time strategy game yet. Strategy purists would argue it's too simplistic, but we'd tell them to lighten up and enjoy the console-orientated action. After socking 'em in the belly for being so lame, of course.

■ What's the best bit?
Unusually – and thankfully – it's been designed specifically for the console market. What this means is that the controls and interface are easy to get to grips with and not just a crappy version of a PC game. I was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to start wreaking havoc.

■ And the worst?
Goblins? They're a bit passe aren't they? I know the whole world is on a bit of a *Lord of the Rings* trip at the minute, but it would have been nice to have a mix of races like in *StarCraft*.

■ Do I need to have played RTS games before to know what's going on?
Not at all. In fact, *Goblin Commander* is designed with you in mind. Its simplicity of play and fewer units to control don't make this especially easier than other RTS games, but it does shift the focus a bit to make it more suitable for a console. If you've never played a strategy game before, this will probably be a fantastic place to start.

■ Even if I hate goblins?
Yeah, 'cos the gameplay does go a long way to overshadowing the stupid game world. It needs that, too.

There are five different goblin clans: Stonecrusher, who excel at combat; Hellfire who are technologically advanced; Stormbringer, experts at magic; Plaguespitter, famed for their guerrilla attack style; and Nighthorde who excel at undead trickery.

■ How does the multiplayer work?
The Skirmish mode plays a lot like the single-player game actually. There are 12 maps to choose from, two of which are exclusive to multiplayer, but only two of you can wage war at one time in the split-screen mode. There's no LAN support either.

out some cool new features.
■ So how is this different from games like Advance Wars then?
Advance Wars and *FF Tactics* are turn-based strategy like chess. You take a turn, your rival makes his move and so on. Real-time strategy instead gives you a battlefield and simply lets you get on with it with the clock ticking. You need to manage your resources and wage war while your rivals are doing the same thing at the same time. It's a lot more like real life. Sorta.

■ How many different clans are there?



Trust me, I've played it

Essentials

The developer: Jaleco
What it's done: Development leads Ron and Chris Millar have worked on such bearded role-players as *Diablo*, *Diablo II*, *StarCraft*, *Warcraft* and *The Lost Vikings*.

Multiplayer: 1-2 players

Connectivity: No

The publisher: Jaleco

Release: February

Review: Next issue

Predicted score

It's solid enough to win over doubters and the way you can possess units adds a twist. Shame it doesn't look better and the fantasy setting isn't inspiring. Ultimately it'll come down to your taste.

NOM UK
Predicts

70%+

StarCraft on N64 was the cause of many a missed coursework deadline for me and I reckon *Goblin Commander* could be a long-overdue step in the right direction for playing strategy games on consoles. The fact that it's not a port of a PC game gives this the chance to try



Here's something you don't know. Kirby was God's initial prototype for a breast. He decided in the end to make them in pairs, without eyes and attach them to a lady's chest, consigning the Kirbyster to the dustbin of creation. But one day, while God was engrossed in making Shigeru Miyamoto, our hero hopped out of the reject bucket to forge a career in video games.

His latest outing is a racing game. We already know it's not for everyone. To accelerate, you do... nothing. A is brake. A is slide. A swallows the power-ups. A is everything. It's pretty uncomplicated, which, as history tells us, can make for some epic multiplayer tussles. And if



Super Sprint with strange, ball-type creatures. It's the future, baby!

Air fours

Can Kirby cope with a quartet of eager gamers?

someone dares ask "What are the buttons again?" you get to fuzz a Wavebird into their eye at high speed.

The Top Race game is cracking. The circuits are short, tight and viewed from a top-down perspective. The game pans out to make sure everyone's on screen and you



If squinting is your thing then you can opt for the split-screen racing option

KIRBY AIR RIDE

just point the stick and go. As you're jostling into corners and nuking each other, the swear words fly. Out of your mouths that is, not the pink man's, unless his blerps and squeets are words so rude we haven't learned them yet.

But hey, don't feel left out if you get your kicks from straining your eyes at the goings on in one corner of a TV screen. There's split-screen racing, too, around the lush tracks from the single player game. *Air Ride* can be a slow-paced game, so you see the corners coming even in mini-vision. There may well be complaints that the fat guys riding the stars aren't moving quickly enough, but winning here isn't purely about straight-line speed. You've got to be a bit clever about it.

Finally, there's the bizarre City Trial mode. It's basically a deathmatch, but set in a glorious environment that looks like it's in the wrong game. You could imagine running around this thing in *Super Mario 64*, but here you are hunting down a pack of other racers. Sightings of your rivals can be a bit infrequent, but you won't mind as you explore the streets.



Kirby Air Ride's courses are short, the races are manic, but Player Two still had time to shop for a nice new hat

Essentials

The developer: HAL Labs
What it's done: *Super Smash Bros. Melee* (GC)
Multiplayer: 1-4 players, split or full-screen mode
Connectivity: zilch
The publisher: Nintendo
Release: February 26th
Review: next issue

Predicted score

The more we play this, the more we appreciate the simplicity. It's a completely different vibe to the other big-name GameCube racers and HAL have really packed it with unlockables like they did with *Smash Bros. Melee*.

NOM UK Predicts **70%+**

The hedgehogs of war

Remember those excellent Sonic platformers from days gone by? Well this is nothing like that at all.

SONIC BATTLE



Sonic is a console chancer. For years the preserve of Sega and their machines, the blue intruder's now feels that he can pop round uncle Mario's house for a cuppa and be welcomed with open arms any time he likes. But nowadays he brings average games with him, not the genius platform romps that we know and love (and demand more of).

Sonic Battle is another departure for the blue flash. It's a fighting RPG. Whilst wandering around his hometown, Sonic happens across a robot that's battered and scratched. Unable to communicate, Sonic takes the 'bot to his friend Tails who discovers that the machine once belonged to Dr Eggman and that it runs on Chaos Emeralds. The robot is a highly evolved piece of kit capable of learning fighting moves from an opponent and then developing its own moves from what it has learned.

But Sonic's not the only one interested in the machine, which they christen Emerl. Shadow and Rouge are both on its tail and they're quite prepared to tear Sonic a new one if he gets in the way. And this is where the fighting comes in.

The bulk of the action takes place in small 3D arenas. You initially have control over Sonic and as you'd expect he's got a fair amount of speed, but he's not afraid to use his fists when necessary. As well as the standard punch and jump manoeuvres, Sonic also has special abilities at his disposal. What's more, these extra powers change depending on the

"Sonic Battle feels too much like the Battle Network games."

position of your character, giving rise to different aerial or ground attacks. And all the while you can teach Emerl new tricks in the hope that one day the robot will be able to show Dr. Eggman where to shave his curly moustache.

The story is fairly entertaining and so far we're pretty impressed by the 3D visuals, which manage to stay smooth no matter how intense the action gets. But the limited controls ultimately stifle the game. How about you bring those good old-fashioned platform games next time you call in, eh, Sonic?



Essentials

The developer: Sonic Team
What it's done: Phantasy Star Online (issue 127, 85%),
 Sonic Adventure 2 Battle (issue 116, 62%), Sonic Adventure DX Director's Cut (issue 130, 71%)

Multiplayer: up to four
Connectivity: not for this little hedgehog

The publisher: Sega
Release: February
Review: next issue

Predicted score

While it's great that Sonic Team are always willing to try something new, *Sonic Battle* feels too much like the *Battle Network* games and that's not good enough. Hopefully by the time it's released there'll be more to shout about.

NOM UK Predicts **60%+**



To the bleep of the drum

To celebrate our fantastic cover gift, **NOM UK** gets jiggy with game music

Tokyo, Japan, August 27th, 2002. The Great Hall of the Tokyo Cultural Center is filled to capacity. The audience, dressed to the nines, applaud as the curtain rises on the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra. Conductor Taizo Takemoto raises his baton and a hundred musicians tense in unison, like coiled springs. Takemoto's arm sweeps downward and the orchestra begins the opening number from... *Star Wing*.

The *Super Smash Bros. Melee* concert, captured for posterity on the very disc you got free with this month's *NOM UK*, may well be the first video game music CD you've ever owned. But concerts like this and CDs like yours are commonplace in the video game culture of Japan, where otaku drop their yen not only on original soundtrack (OST) recordings straight from the games, but on 'arranged' music performed with synthesizers or, increasingly, live instrumentation.

So, just how big is this phenomenon? In 1986 there were 27 video game soundtracks released in Japan. In 1998 alone there were 463. Music stores in Japan have large 'game music' sections the way that your local Virgin Megastore has sections for dance, R&B or rock. And just like you can still find Elvis recordings on CD, remastered versions of 8-bit classics sit comfortably alongside the latest GameCube soundtracks.

Nintendo's own game music is recognised by people all over the world, but the CDs don't have as hardcore a following as, for example, *Final Fantasy* or *Dragon Quest* soundtracks. That doesn't mean that there aren't some great arranged albums of *Mario* or *Zelda* tunes, it just means you'll have to look a little harder to find them. In this feature we'll be showing you some of the best (and rarest) video game soundtracks with a Nintendo connection.

Better than surround sound...

Famous video game concerts of last year

MARIO AND ZELDA BIG BAND LIVE

September 14th, 2003
Nippon Seinenkan Hall, Tokyo

The Blue Band of Rogues joined the bluegrass group, Arita Band, to put on the most foot-stompin' game music concert since Shania Twain sang the *Pokémon* opening (note: this never happened, thank God). At one point, Miyamoto himself picked up a guitar and later jammed along with the bands for the finale, *Rainbow Cruise*.



THE BLACK MAGES LIVE

April 26th-27th, 2003
Shibuya-AX, Tokyo

Final Fantasy series composer, Nobuo, got into music because he wanted to be like Elton John! Well, Nobuo's done Reg one better, packing Tokyo concert halls two nights in a row with The Black Mages, a rock band featuring Square musicians rocking out to *Final Fantasy* numbers like *Dancing Mad*, Kefka's boss music from *Final Fantasy VI* and an incredible version of the fan-favourite *Battle With Gilgamesh* from *Final Fantasy V*.



Rarer than hens' teeth

Gold diggers, pay attention, these are the discs to make you rich

GAME MUSIC CONCERT

Quality: ★★★★
Rarety: ★★★★

The *Game Music Concert* series (also known as *Orchestral Game Concert*) numbers five ultra-rare recordings of gigs held from 1991-95. Each featured hits from the NES and Super NES: themes from *Super Mario World* and *Final Fantasy* joined obscure music from *Populous* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The fourth featured a version of the opera scene from *Final Fantasy VI* – it ran for 20 minutes! Why so rare? The CD rights are held by former Nintendo pals, Sony Records.



SUPER MARIO COMPACT DISCO: AMBASSADORS OF FUNK FEAT. MC MARIO

Quality: ★★★★
Rarety: ★★★★

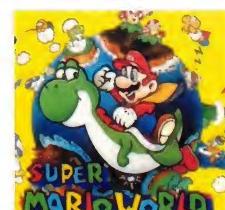
Mario has proven himself to be a jack-of-all-trades – plumbing, karting, golfing... about the only thing he hasn't done is rap. Oh wait, yes he did – with the Ambassadors of Funk. Rapper Einstein put in an unforgettable performance as MC Mario, singing about Daisy in *Super Mario Land* over a loop of the awesome World 1 music. It shot to no.8 on the UK charts before being released as part of a full album of Mario rap tunes in Japan.



SUPER MARIO WORLD

Quality: ★★★★
Rarety: ★★★★

What happens when *Dragon Quest* composer, Koichi Sugiyama, gets a crack at Mario music? A light jazz album that sands down the peppy *Super Mario World* themes to saucy smoothness. The disc opens with buttery arrangements of the first few tracks from *SMW*, then moves on to a rendition of the original *Super Mario Bros.* theme that sizzles with a sax solo. More live instrumentation would've been better, but this disc proves good game music comes in all genres. Bonus: disc two contains the complete OSTs to the first four Mario games.



SOUND TEST

NOM UK's GAME CD

These are the platters that matter. Chris Kohler dips into

SYMPHONIC SUITE FINAL FANTASY



Quality: ★★★★★ **Rarity:** ★★★★★

Come with us on a journey back to the distant past, a long-forgotten year known as 1989 and a fledgling Famicom series called *Final Fantasy*. Nobuo Uematsu's 8-bit scores were far ahead of their time and Square saw fit to fully recognise their greatness with a live orchestral concert of music from the first two *Final*

Fantasy games. The disc is full of profoundly moving string renditions of the best tunes from both games, culminating in a high-powered choral version of the Rebel Army theme from *Final Fantasy II*. A more recent concert, *Final Fantasy 2002*, is also available on CD.

FAMICOM MUSIC (VOL. 1 AND 2)



Quality: ★★★★★ **Rarity:** ★★★★★

If your tastes run to the truly old skool, consider this two-volume set of Famicom (NES) music. Though the focus is on original soundtrack medleys of Nintendo classics like *Donkey Kong*, *Wrecking Crew*, *Metroid*, *Golf*, *Tennis*, and *Kid Icarus*, the albums also feature a few nifty synthesizer-arranged versions of *Super Mario Bros.*, *Balloon Fight* and *Doki Doki Panic* (the game that became *SMB2* in the West). Bonus: the first volume

contains a booklet of sheet music to the original tunes and the second ships in a retro Disk System styled box.



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA OCARINA OF TIME RE-ARRANGED ALBUM



Quality: ★★★★★ **Rarity:** ★★★★★

Even if retro beeps ain't your thang, Nintendo's still got you covered. This CD features unique and diverse interpretations of 12 songs straight out of Link's first N64 outing. There are upbeat dance tunes guaranteed to make you move your feet, like *Shop* (no, really, it's great) and *Hyrule Field Main Theme*. There's the chill-inducing Gregorian chant-style *Temple of Time*. And there's *Epona's Song*, the vocal version of *Lon Lon Ranch* sung by Emiko Shiratori with lyrics by Shigeru Miyamoto. Perhaps the best *Zelda* album yet.



METROID PRIME & FUSION ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACKS

Quality: ★★★★★ **Rarity:** ★★★★★

Double your pleasure and double your fun. If you don't like GBA sounds, you might not want the *Fusion* disc, but *Metroid Prime*'s ambient soundtrack won high praise for its eerie New Age tones.



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: KAZE NO TAKUTO (THE WIND WAKER) ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACKS

Quality: ★★★★★ **Rarity:** ★★★★★

This double-disc set contains all the neo-classic tunes that set the mood for Link's most recent adventure. Buyer beware: much of the second disc is taken up with ultra-short tracks like 'opening a treasure box'.



FINAL FANTASY IV CELTIC MOON

Quality: ★★★★★ **Rarity:** ★★★★★

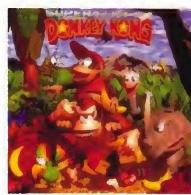
FF arranged albums abound, but only one features authentic Irish arrangements from accomplished players like Maire Breathnach and Sharon Shannon. Chris' personal fave.



SUPER DONKEY KONG JUNGLE FANTASY

Quality: ★★★★★ **Rarity:** ★★★★★

Super Donkey Kong is the Japanese name for *DK Country*. The game was mediocre, but the music was awesome and this combination of an arranged version and the OST is a must for any DK fan.



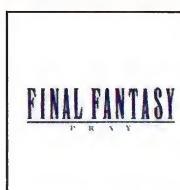
BUYER'S GUIDE

his massive collection and tells you what you need...

FINAL FANTASY: PRAY

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

This is a collection of vocal songs based on classic FF tunes, sung by Risa Ohki in four different languages. From the opening strains of the prelude to the town song from FFVI, *Pray* is one of the best and most unique game-music albums ever pressed.



ETERNAL ARCADIA OST

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

If you're looking for the soundtrack to Sega's high-flying RPG *Skies of Arcadia: Legends*, make sure to look under its Japanese name. This is the Dreamcast version, but we probably won't get in trouble for saying that now.



SEIKEN DENSETSU SOUND COLLECTIONS

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

Are you in love with *Sword of Mana*'s music? If so, grab this CD and be in awe of the seven symphonic tracks. Then take the CD out quickly, before the tinny Game Boy bleeping starts.



MAJORA'S MASK ORCHESTRATIONS

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

Not really 'orchestrated' per se, this disc features computer synthesizers doing a decent impression of live musicians. It enjoyed a limited pressing, but isn't worth the hunt unless you're a crazed fan.



PROJECT MAJESTIC MIX: A TRIBUTE TO NOBUO UEMATSU

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

And now for something completely different – a fan-arranged *Final Fantasy* album featuring tunes new and old. Find out more about this unique collaborative effort and order the CD from www.majesticmix.com.



SYMPHONIC SUITE DRAGON QUEST ~BEST SELECTION~ (TWO VOLUMES)

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

There are dozens of *Dragon Quest* orchestrated albums. The question is, where to start? Try this greatest-hits for size, featuring the London Philharmonic Orchestra.



HYRULE SYMPHONY

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

Another audio delight filled with *Ocarina of Time* tunes, this time by (you guessed it) a symphony orchestra. Hard to find, but well worth the effort. What's more, the packaging is as exquisite as the arrangements.



NINTENDO GSM I: SUPER MARIO BROS. 3

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

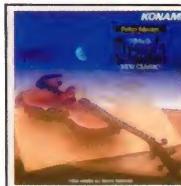
If you see this on eBay, you might be tempted by good memories of *Super Mario Bros. 3*. But the few arranged tracks on this disc don't make it worth the price. Just turn the game on and listen to the music that way.



DRACULA NEW CLASSIC PERFECT SELECTION

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

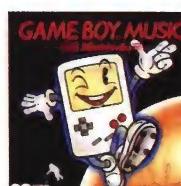
Konami CDs are tough to find as it is, but this disc, featuring *Castlevania* tunes done up in classical style, is one of the rarest CDs in existence, fetching over \$300 on eBay. Sadly, it's also one of the best game music CDs ever. If only we weren't journalists and could afford it...



NINTENDO GSM 2: GAME BOY MUSIC

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

A little harder to come by than the *Mario 3* disc, but more fun to listen to, this 1989-vintage album features the only synthesized versions of *Super Mario Land* and GB *Tetris*, among others. *Mario Land* music rocks.



SECRET OF MANA

Quality: ★★★★☆ Rarity: ★★★★★

Here's an odd little number – this version of *Secret of Mana* is one extra-long track in which the electronica-arranged tunes blend right into one another with no breaks. We wish this landmark OST had been given the classical treatment, but no dice. Maybe for a GBA remake, hmm?



Where to get them

Thanks to the magical resource that is the world wide interweb, the mysteries of the Orient now lie at your fingertips. Two of our favourite Japanese retailers – and both experienced with international orders – are [CD Japan](http://cdjapan.co.jp) (cdjapan.co.jp) and [Coco E-Biz](http://cocoebiz.com) (cocoebiz.com). Of course, if you're looking for rare or deleted CDs, you may have no recourse other than good old eBay (www.ebay.co.uk)





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Scores and Awards

90+	A Nintendo classic
85-89	Exceptional in its class
80-84	Great fun, but not ground-breaking
70-79	Some nice ideas, but lacks Nintendo magic
60-69	Few classic moments, for die-hards only
50-59	Been there, seen it, played it. Yawn!
40-49	No ideas, no gameplay, no way
30-39	Not worth buying
0-29	Not worth stealing



POISON
A real minger that might give you a bad disease just by touching it. Like Universal Studios.



SUPERSTAR
We'll dish these out each issue to the best games, regardless of whether they're on GameCube or GBA.

068 Sonic Heroes



THE
ONLY
OFFICIAL
VERDICT



085 SSX 3



085 Mission Impossible:
Operation Surma



082 NFL Street



080 Looney Tunes



078 Medal of Honor:
Infiltrator



085 Hot Wheels
World Race



084 Jimmy Neutron:
Jet Fusion



076 Rogue Ops



081 The Sims:
Bustin' Out

12:01 pm
\$0



084 SpongeBob
SquarePants



84 Terminator 3



074 Gotcha Force

"On the speed scale it's above Concorde and slightly below light."





Sonic Heroes

**Don't give up on the hedgehog.
The magic is still there, you just have to work for it.**

It's not strange to hear a sixteen-year-old swear. Swearing, despite what your mum tells you, is funny AND cool. Hearing Knuckles the Echidna shouting "sh*t!" every time he smashes something does sound weird though. Bold, primary colours juxtaposed

with equally colourful language.

"Sh*t!" as he smashes a block. "Sh*t, sh*t, SH*T!" as he smashes three robots into bolts and scrap metal. Mr and Mrs the Echidna must be mortified. If they were also to find that dog-eared copy of PlayEchidna under his mattress, Knuckles

would be grounded forever. No more adventures with a blue hedgehog.

Based on the last couple of GameCube Sonic games, that might not sound like a bad deal at all. Both *Adventure* games were destroyed by a camera that had absolutely no idea where it was supposed



Game info

Price: £39.99
Publisher: Sega
Web: www.sega.com
Players: 1-2
Memory: 2 blocks

Out Now

to be looking. Maybe it was embarrassed by the Dreamcast graphics, which really did look old on GameCube. That's not a problem on *Sonic Heroes*, though. It looks gorgeous. The cameraman? Still far from perfect. You can allow that to wreck the game for you, or you can fight it. Make the choice now. Play on, or turn off.

In fact, if Sonic Team ever learn to program 3D properly, Mario might have to find a new job. Some of the levels here are absolute genius. It starts off pretty tamely, but by the time you're halfway through the whole thing has just caught fire. And by that point, you've gotten used to the technical flaws – you're staying well clear of that C-Stick and its tendency to chuck you into a POINTLESS first-person view.

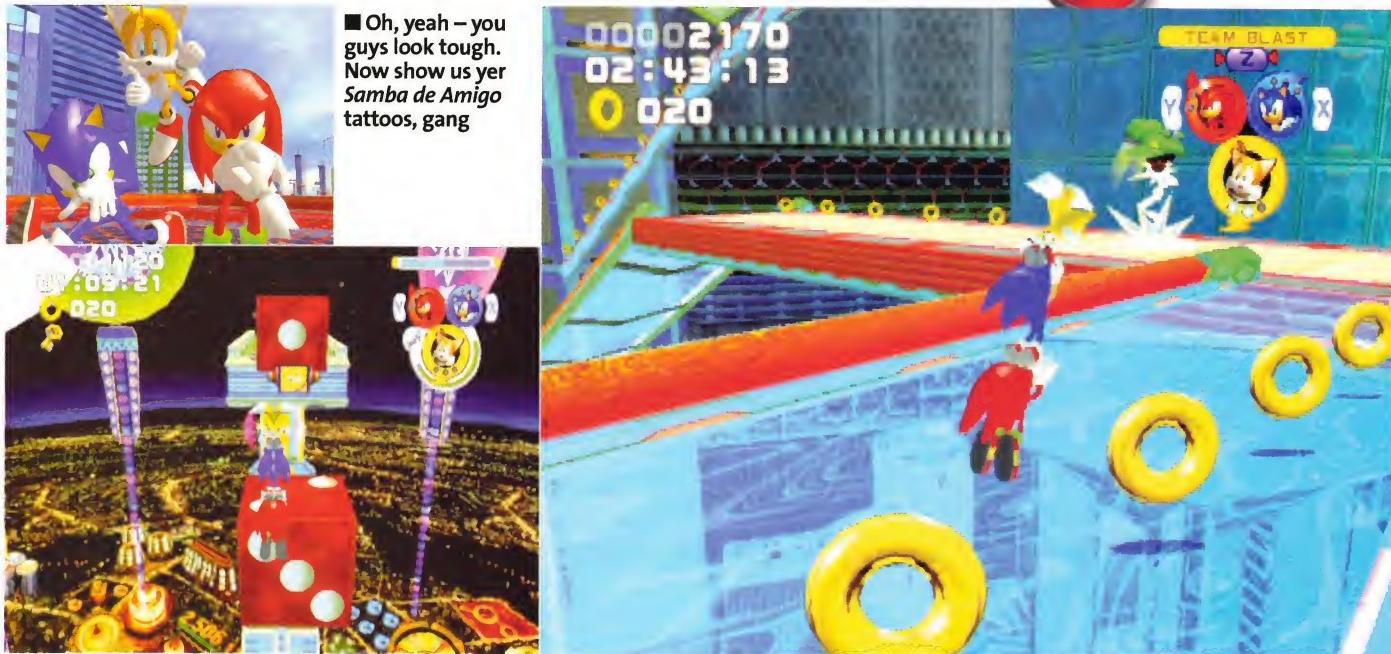
There's nothing in video games like a *Sonic the Hedgehog* game in full flight. The eye-burning velocity as the blue flash zooms around a loop and plunges down through lines

of rings. Just like on the Mega Drive where the animal made his name, *Heroes* is preposterously quick in places. On the speed scale, it's above Concorde and slightly below light. You smash the poor little guys off walls, because you can't very well do anything but. It's a wonder their skulls don't splinter and slice their brains.

It's called *Heroes*, see, because you control a team of three. Actually, four teams of three. Team Sonic has Tails (can hover), Knuckles (is powerful) and Sonic (speedy). You control one and the rest tag along. Sonic blats around a ring and there are robots at the bottom. Switch to Knuckles and mash them up. Get to a high platform and hover up with Tails. That's about the size of it. But it gets to the point where you're switching animals in a split second and doing combo



"It looks absolutely fantastic for a start, with rich textures underfoot and twisty paths."



That token two-player

Sonic Team are convinced you have friends. How foolish they are...

It's presumably as illegal to make hedgehogs fight as it is pitbulls and cocks. Racing them, though, is completely fine. Go figure that one out.

That's how *Sonic Heroes* introduces a bit of competition into proceedings. The screen is split down the middle and the levels that were so eye-wateringly, thunderously quick in the single-player game are suddenly a bit jerky. Umm, thanks Sega – don't bother next time.



They race for their lives, the victor will eat the loser



There's time to take a rest in two-player – it's slow



■ (left) That good old feeling of Sonic vertigo is back



■ (right) Team Blast pick up lost rings all over the place, but never hand them in



attacks. Weaken flying droids with Tails, then flip to Knuckles and smash them up.

The game forces you to rotate the guys around. It's impossible to play through with one character. You can often take different routes which suit a certain creature, but it gives the game a nice variety from the off. The other three teams (Dark, Rose and Chaotix) basically have the same abilities. It's not really four games in one since the levels stay the same, but there are different objectives each time. The Chaotix detective missions are the most distinct, with the other three representing easy, medium and hard difficulty levels.

But from the first turbo-charged steps in the first level, it's clear that this is a very different proposition from what's come before. It looks absolutely fantastic for a start, with rich textures underfoot and twisty paths stretching out as far as the eye can see. The levels are much larger too and there's actually some exploring to be done instead of just crashing along in a straight line. You don't batter through the stages in a couple of minutes here; even

Special needs

What's a Sonic game without a weird bonus round, eh?



In this end-of-level stage you get flushed down a posh toilet collecting stuff – cool

If you make it to the end of a stage with the hidden key, a world of joy awaits you. Or, more accurately, some swirly ducts full of things you can grab for points. There was something like it on one of the Mega Drive games back in the day, but we can't remember which one. Don't blame us – it was a long time ago and we've seen a lot of games since. We just used to jump on occasionally to make sure it was still worse than *Super Mario World*. Which it was, incidentally.



Look at them go... okay you can stop now

"It's brilliant fun, but it's still flawed. That's the bottom line."

when you know what you're doing there's a good ten minutes in each. There's no tedious hub level to navigate either: you just get dropped in at the start of each course. The Casino stages are some of the most impressive things you'll see in games this year. Sonic and co are dropped into this fantastic neon apocalypse, with blinking lights assaulting you from every angle. It's Las Vegas to the power of a million and the whole thing is based around pinball tables. Sonic hops into a tube, gets fired onto a giant flipper and away you go. You're battering the flippers and steering Sonic to try and escape each table. There are fruit machine style mini-games you trigger by flipping Sonic into them and the punishment for dropping off the table is instant death. It's amazingly good fun, and immediately makes up for the pain you've suffered getting there.

Pain-wise, we're not just talking about the cameras, here – Sonic Team also find it difficult to manage a difficulty curve. Without warning, you'll be dropped into a scenario that's nigh on





impossible. Early on, there's a circular room filling with lava. You've got to jump the heroes up and around the outside walls – one missed jump means a deadly lava bath. Fair enough, until you have to also make precision jumps AND kill robots to open the ceiling so you aren't sealed inside a fiery tomb. You're filmed from above, which makes it incredibly difficult to judge the position of the pulleys which will winch you up and out of danger when you grab them. Seriously, we were going ballistic.

A boss battle about halfway in sees Eggman serve you up, ooh, about a hundred lethal robots to dispatch on a small floating platform. The whole scrap takes about four



■ The food chain – harsh, but fair



Marital bliss

It's the stupidest game plot device ever

Sonic's got a whole lot of crap to deal with in his life. Enough for any one hedgehog, surely. Forget massive robots wanting to tear him a new asshole, now there's some freaky girl on his case that's insisting they get MARRIED. Sonic is only FIFTEEN. Amy is just TWELVE. For some reason Sonic doesn't say to Amy "Er, HELLO?! It's ILLEGAL for us to get married. Plus, you're mental. Please go away now". Luckily, you get to mess with the bunny-boiling broad in a boss fight. That'll teach her.



Amy – strange, obsessive, dangerous



Here the fevered dreams of some Sonic Team member have been given shape. Chilling

minutes and any one of those guys can end it for you. They just keep coming and coming, and getting harder and harder. A split-second's lapse in concentration and you're finished. There's never any clue how close to the end you are. After the eighth doomed attempt you feel like killing somebody.

But then, in the very next level, comes the payback. A series of exhilarating rail rides above yawning canyons, with spiky black death trains doing their best to disembowel you. Suddenly, it's fun again. And exciting. The high points here make *Billy Hatcher* seem like a sarcastic joke. When *Sonic Heroes* truly hits the heights, you can see why all



■ Splinters in your face – Knuckles cares not for poor Tails' eyes



■ Seconds later a generation lost a gaming icon



■ Check out those second-rate Sonic characters below! Cool



Hey, where's the turtle going?



"The high points here make *Billy Hatcher* seem like a sarcastic joke."

■ It's like Isle Delfino, but with more rings and less mushrooms



■ The hard men flee, leaving Tails

the Mega Drive kids thought Mario was rubbish. They were wrong of course, because *Super Mario World* showed *Sonic* up for the one-trick pony it was, but it does stir passion. You start to take this cheeky little blue interloper to heart.

Maybe this is the closest the Sonic speed-rush gameplay is ever going to come to working in 3D. It's clearly a descendant of the 16-bit games from the second you switch it on, but the genius of *Mario 64* was that it wasn't trying to be *Super Mario World* in 3D. This is a trick the hedgehog has yet to get wise to. If he'll insist on thundering around loops at hundreds of miles an hour, the camera's never going to catch up with him is it? But hey, he's keeping it real. He's doing what he does. And that metallic 'ching' as Sonic ploughs through a line of rings makes your brain happy. The speed at which he does it makes your brain hurt.

It's brilliant fun, but it's still flawed. That's the bottom line. You have to have some motivation to get you through the sticky patches (a love of Sonic, or the fact that you're being paid to play it, etc), but the high points are just the platforming tonic you need if your holiday on Isle Delfino is just a fading memory. *Dean Scott*



So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You have the patience of a saint and a *Sonic the Hedgehog* bedspread. And pyjamas.

No if...

You go crying to mummy at the first sign of trouble. There are technical faults here...

You'll love it if you like...

Flawed genius. Like watching *Pulp Fiction* on a badly tuned-in, black and white TV.

GRAPHICS 9

When God invented colours, this was the sort of application he had in mind.

SOUND 8

Good tunes, but it'd be better if the animals didn't whine like little kids.

GAMEPLAY 7

The variety is spot on, but camera flaws and the difficulty level crush the fun.

LIFE SPAN 30 HOURS

It's the biggest *Sonic* yet, with bucket-loads of replay value.

VERDICT

> At times, it feels like a 70%-er. At others, it's a 90%-er. Platform fans have got to check it out, but you might need to pay someone to finish the annoying bits for you, for the sake of your own sanity.



BEST BIT: The Casino levels. Sonic magic working at full strength.

WORST BIT: Sonic Team just can't seem to design a camera that works.

SECOND OPINION

> Sonic's only 15 and I'm sick of him. The runt was a one-game critter at best, but here we are in 2004 going "wow, can't you STILL run fast!" Zzzzzzz... *Kingsley Singleton*

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■ Ignore the dull landscapes and concentrate on mashing stuff up



■ Giving is always better than receiving, especially when it involves laser death-rays



■ A new Borg was the only thing that could cheer-up the kid with three eyebrows



■ Magazines don't have sound, so we'll have to improvise: BZZZACK!



■ Want more bang for your buck? Splash the cash on modding here



Gotcha Force

Crazy Japanese robot action all round in this game of miniature collect and conquer. Set phaze gun to incinerate metal...

> Like a schizophrenic werewolf maths genius trapped inside the body of a four-year old, Gotcha Force has a lot more beneath the surface than its innocent exterior suggests.

It seems simple at first. It's your job to roam your home town, fighting battles with your ever-expanding collection of miniature robots, called Gotcha Borgs. Battles take place in restricted square arenas, with simple obstacles to use for cover or to launch attacks from. Your first ten (or so) battles suggest there are no complex winning strategies; simply destroy the enemy Borgs before they cane you.

Even the controls are easy enough to grasp without a lengthy tutorial. Guns can be fired five times in a volley before they need a brief moment to recharge, while melee attacks are triggered automatically if you're close enough to punch,

kick or lunge. There's even a one-shot special move for each robot, accessible if you've charged enough power. So, nothing so radical that it'll challenge your gaming skills, but over time tiny flashes of hidden depth begin to twinkle as you play. And slowly they grow as brash and explosive as the on-screen blasts of nuclear energy your army of robots are chucking around.

The depth of play comes from the collectable rewards you earn by defeating foes in battle. From enemy parts to new human allies who'll lend their own toys to your cause, there's always more cool robotic stuff to muck about with. You accumulate Gotcha Force Energy points as you battle and you trade this energy for new team-mates to add to your squad. The more Borgs you have in battle the longer you can scrap, but each type of Borg costs a different amount of

energy. Big 'bots will be tougher in battle but cost a lot more than swifter, smaller robots that you could have more of.

The strategies are subtle at first, but before long you'll be managing your army and constructing new Borgs from recovered parts like a proper mad scientist. It's not as tactical as games like *Goblin Commander* or *Advance Wars*, but it's enough to bulk out the slightly shallower and more repetitive battle sections. These are frantic and full of explosive effects, but because of the simple graphical style, you never really feel you're dishing out quite as much hurt as you should be. The background graphics are laughable, with flat textures and boxy objects, and in spite of the cool robot designs, the whole thing has the look of a pre-teen game, rather than the hardcore action/battler it wants to be.

The camera too causes many

problems, often swirling and zooming around your Borg so fast that it flies through objects, obscuring your view, or pointing straight up at the sky, precisely the opposite direction needed for keeping track of your lightning-paced rivals' positions on the map. The game is also fairly easy and you can actually get by fairly well with just the minimum of tweaking with robot parts and upgrades.

But in spite of its flaws, there's something compelling about seeing what new Borg creations lie ahead. The battles are frantic and over quick enough to make it perfect to dip in and out of, and the multiplayer battling is wicked fun with mates. The trouble is, they might sock you in the belly for even suggesting a game though, as *Gotcha* doesn't do quite enough to convince newbies or more casual players to look beyond its Early Learning exterior. **Darren Fox**

Game info

Price: £39.99
Publisher: Capcom
Web: www.capcom.com
Players: 1-4
Memory: 3 blocks

Out
Feb 20th

Oi Peacenik, shove off

Wanted: people to grind tiny metal creatures into the mud

■ There are no prizes for the pacifist approach when playing *Gotcha Force*. Instead it's a case of shred or be shredded. Losers can't even retire to lick their mechanical wounds, as the winning Borg can usually steal parts and blueprints from the broken rival, helping you replicate their abilities. You'll also occasionally be treated to a Data Capsule after battle, which is useful for increasing the number and type of death-dealing robots in your miniature mobile army. Dedicated players will love battling over and over to win new parts and build new Borgs, but for some, the reward might not be big enough to keep you at it.



From the tiny capsules come the biggest guns, like the mighty Gatling Gunner



Scavenge enough bits and bobs and you can create awesome new Borgs

"There's always more cool robotic stuff to muck about with."



■ 'No Ammo!' – the only thing worse than 'No Toilet Roll!'



■ Feel the power of... what they're only tiny?! Oh, who cares...

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You're mad on robots and love unlocking new characters and upgrades to play with.

No if...

You like your games to look 'grown-up' – visually this is Kidsville.

You'll love it if you like...

Pokémon, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, *Digimon*... basically anything bonkers, Japanese and collectible.

GRAPHICS 6

Weak backgrounds and flat colours, but at least the Borg designs are great.

SOUND 5

Nothing special here. Naff synth-disco tunes and standard gun noises.

GAMEPLAY 7

Simple, addictive and fast paced enough to keep you busy. Gets repetitive though.

LIFE SPAN 20 HOURS

It only lasts if you like the collecting or have friends with copies of the game.

VERDICT

► A weird one. There's no doubting the manic fun on offer and there's depth to it, too. If only the setting and robots were grittier and less cute it would have loads more appeal beyond primary school.



BEST BIT: Getting a new Borg and testing its destructive power.

WORST BIT: Really crappy backgrounds – it's not funny.

SECOND OPINION

► It's a nice concept, but doesn't have the depth I expect from a fighter. I'm not into collecting small robot things either, but that's because I'm not five. *Dominic Wint*

Nintendo

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"TINY, BUT TAME"

71 %

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**Tested****First. Official. Best.**

Rogue Ops

Game info

Price: £39.99
Publisher: Kemco
Web: www.rogueops.com
Players: 1
Memory: 8 blocks

Out
Feb 6th

Imagine you work for a TV company and your boss wants a brand-new soap opera – something that'll be bigger than *EastEnders*. It's your job to come up with the goods. But ugh! It'll take ages to invent something totally new and you've only got five minutes or you're sacked. That's when you invent *Hollyoaks*, when all the lowest-common denominators and cheapest fleshy ideas come rushing to the surface in a tsunami of dire TV. Actually we don't mind *Hollyoaks* – but we only watch it with the sound turned down.

And we don't mind *Rogue Ops* either – it's just a little embarrassing when you see a game this needy and derivative, screaming "please love me, I'm just as good as the others". But there's a while before *Twin Snakes* and *Pandora Tomorrow*

arrive, and if stealth games and corking butts are your bag we reckon *Rogue Ops*' Nikki Connors might have just about enough to fill the void – if only in a snacking between meals kind of way. If you've never sneaked around with *Splinter Cell*'s Sam Fisher though, that's certainly a better place to start.

Ops is solid enough for the most part. You'll do a lot of crawling through air vents and ducking under laser tripwires. There are the usual clever environmental puzzles, the near-constant need to avoid detection and a nice angle on stealth kills where, after moving into position behind your quarry, you flick the 3D Stick around, Simon Says-style. Do it right and you'll get a nice cut-scene showing Nikki breaking some poor sap's neck. Do it wrong and they'll end her. It's pretty hard to muck it up though.

There's also a vast array of cool gadgets and tasty weapons, made even more fun to use by the need to suppress your natural gaming desires most of the time. See a guy in uniform and you'll be halfway to creating another widow before realising

you can't just drop him. But when you do finally get to squeeze the trigger it's a sweet, sweet relief. We liked that. We know that's the point of stealth games – but it's clear that this is a niche title. And thanks to the impending arrival of two new occupants, *Rogue Ops*' space in that niche will soon be tighter than Nikki Connor's hotpants.

What really lets *Ops* down is a lack of finesse. There are very few nice touches and an almost total inability to interact with the environment. Example? Rusty gates creak in the wind, but try running into them and they don't budge. In fact, nothing seems to move when you hit it, even flimsy office chairs on coasters are apparently glued to the carpet. The sub-B-movie dialogue goes for laughs and there's the occasional sight-gag, lots of swearing and blood, but try photocopying your arse in an empty office and you'll be disappointed. Some more

attention to detail would've made *Ops* stand out. *Splinter Cell* oozes Cold War paranoia. *Metal Gear* is all manga-fuelled future fantasy. *Rogue Ops* is tame by comparison. It's clearly a missed opportunity.

Despite looking so lithe, Nikki can be a beast to control – until you master the clumsy controls. And why can't she jump over boxes and up onto three-foot ledges? Still, there's no denying she'll be popular in bedrooms up and down the country, having mysteriously gone up a couple of bra sizes and been at the peroxide since our preview in issue 134.

There's also an occasional but no less annoying problem with the framerate, spoiling many a firefight and, in a surprisingly brave (and possibly stupid) move, there don't appear to be any extras. That's a thumbs up from us though – the last thing we want is to sit through another half-job deathmatch mode. *Kingsley Singleton*

"When you finally squeeze the trigger it's a sweet, sweet relief."



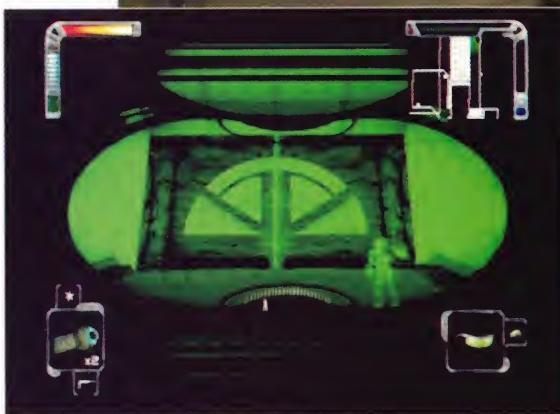
■ Nikki Connors reaches out to another sufferer of banana-arm disease



■ *Changing Rooms* was even harder with laser tripwires



■ "There must be a copy of *Splinter Cell* in here somewhere"



■ Infra red – useful for looking through walls and making sure food is cooked



■ Follow this easy, three-step recipe for neck-breaking fun



■ Unless those are Kevlar arms you're in trouble, mate



■ Dimitri models clothes to get shot in



Baby got back

NOM UK exposes new advances in polygon modelling...

■ *Splinter Cell* and *Metal Gear* never sold as many copies as *Tomb Raider*, but they're better games. Why? *P.N.03* sold a hell of a lot more than it should have. What's the answer? Well, you're sitting on it.

Okay, we all know that sex sells, but clearly the art of modelling ladies' bottoms in polygons is fast approaching its creative zenith. We've never cared for Croft's blocky backside,



Rogue Ops' Nikki – you might go blind

but Vanessa's derriere was the highlight of *P.N.03* and Nikki Connors' rump will certainly shift copies of *Ops*.

Surely had it not been for shady government organisations and big, bad space robots in white corridors Schneider and Connors would've been raking it in as professional models long ago. And now they are, in *Pro Arse Model II*. Sadly that's only available in Japan though.



P.N.03's Vanessa – yum. *P.N.03* – yuck

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You like waiting for guards to wander into view or you broke your copy of *Splinter Cell*.

No if...

It's action you're after – even when the bullets are flying, this is pretty tame.

You'll love it if you like...

Sniper scopes, being quiet and that area between a lady's upper legs and lower back.

GRAPHICS

7

Well-animated, but the textures are poor and there's little object interaction.

SOUND

6

A tense soundtrack is sullied by some of the worst voice-acting ever.

GAMEPLAY

7

It's pretty standard stuff if you've played a stealth game before.

LIFE SPAN

1 WEEK

There are eight missions, but you have to crawl through most of them.

VERDICT

> Old recipe for games development: when lacking inspiration take one best-selling format and sprinkle liberally with blood and curse words. Apply hot female. Caution: may emerge half-baked.



BEST BIT: There's genuine tension in evading capture.

WORST BIT: The static environments made us weep.

SECOND OPINION

> When *Metal Gear* arrives this will likely be GameCube's third-best stealth game. Do you need THREE stealth games? Maybe if you're practicing for a real murder... *Dean Scott*

Nintendo

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"CHEEKY"

73%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Medal of Honor: Infiltrator

Sorry Germany, we just love killing your digitised forebears.

Game info

Price: £29.99

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Web: www.mohgame.com

Players: 1-2

Out
Now

As a soldier, you've often got to go through hell before you get your reward. Getting covered in a mate's entrails when he steps on a mine, then getting a medal. Being tortured with boiling water for four weeks, then getting rescued and sent home to a parade. And worst of all: having to play *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* before they let you loose on *Infiltrator*.

Imagine the red faces at EA. The mini-*Medal of Honor* blitzes its widescreen big brother in the fun stakes. It carpet bombs that shiny disc back into the stone age. It does this by playing to the strengths of Nintendo's handheld. Out goes blocky fake 3D which looked like vomit and in come little guys. Little guys stalking through little towns viewed from above. It's not a new idea of course, but it hasn't been done this well for ages.

Immediately it feels right. The first few Nazis amble into view and you let fly with the machine gun. There's a pleasing gak-gak-gak sound as your bullets cut the Hun down. You can flush people out of gun nests with a well-aimed grenade. You can duck into the shadows and sneak through sections if you fancy it. It feels like a ton of different classic arcade games (remember *Commando*?) but also has a whiff of *Metal Gear* about it.

Like its big brother, you've got a number of objectives to complete during each mission. Retrieve important documents from buildings, set dynamite in ammo dumps, sabotage fighter planes, you know the sort of thing. The Germans react to your gunfire and come running, usually into a stream of hot lead. That's awesome. We don't want these guys to be clever, we just want them to die. The controls wouldn't allow a fiddly game of hide and seek anyway.

The genius of it, though, is that Rambo tactics will just get you killed. Engage a squad of Germans at the same time and they'll just blast you into tiny red

pieces. It's unforgiving like that. Best to try and split them off into smaller groups and kill them, ideally with the noiseless bayonet attack. The clatter of gunfire in a camp sets the alarms wailing, meaning you've got to hide or make the area safe by massacring absolutely everyone.

With the alarms blaring, enemies come flooding from places you could have sworn were empty when you passed by. We've even seen groups of guys pop magically onto the screen, which does feel like you're being cheated. Little Jake Murphy doesn't seem to be in much of a hurry either, trudging along when you kind of think he should be really legging it.

The biggest flaw, though, is the length of this. It's usually considered a good thing when wars end quickly, but not in this case. Provided you can smash through the brick wall of difficulty that appears in the final stages, you'll crack it in a weekend. Where's the harm in this raging on a bit longer, EA? There are no innocents to kill here, only nasty Germans. Don't you see, EA? It's funny when I

obliterate them in my tank, or rip a bazooka shell into a pack of them as they discuss bratwurst and frauleins. And don't even try that GameCube link-up line. All I'd get is a map. It's not magically going to make *Rising Sun* any less painful. **Dean Scott**

Playing it on the go

Connectivity...



Get a map in *Rising Sun*. Big deal.

Better Back Lit...



The villages at night are pretty dark.

Multiplayer...



A neat little two-player deathmatch.

Save...



Three slots. Get in there.

Extras...



Our hopes were riddled with bullets.

Where we played it...

In the checkout queue at Tesco, appearing incredibly rude to the lady holding her hand out for the cash. Hold on woman, let me just flame-grill this jeep.

"Immediately it feels right. The Nazis amble into view and you let fly with the machine gun."

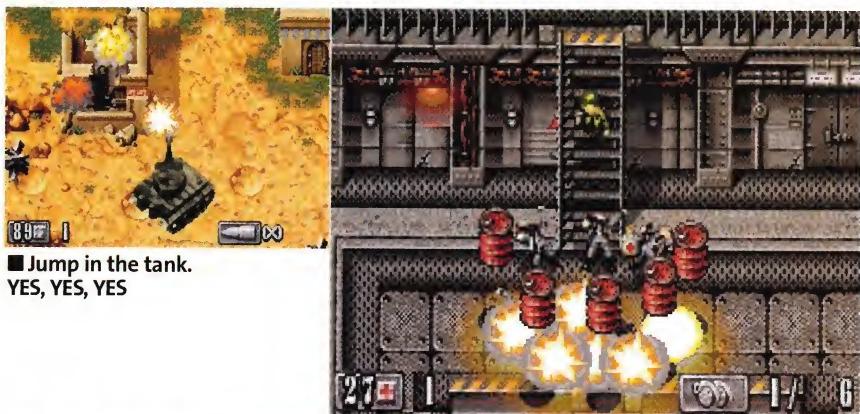
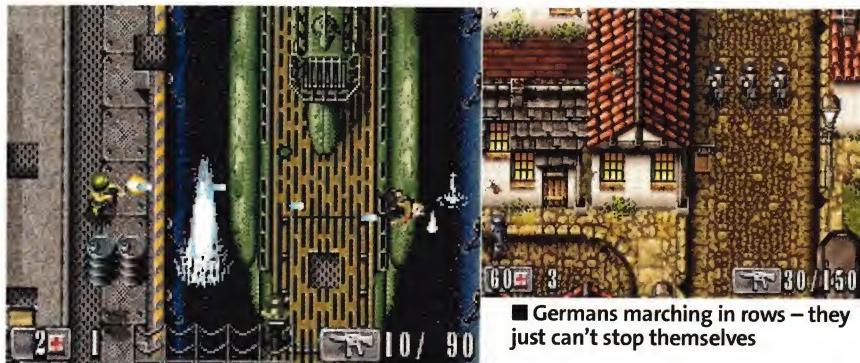


■ Oh, thanks – do you think they know who to shoot at now? Can we please make that huge green arrow flash red as well?



■ Health or bullets? Death dealing is always the priority

■ Search bases and shattered buildings... isn't that called looting?



Think big

Innovation is the key to a GBA winner

■ It would've been enough if *Infiltrator* was just the classy top-down game it is. But no, EA wanted to mix it up a bit. So you get occasional stages that play like an arcade gun game. You move the cross hairs and shoot at the guys firing mortars at you. It feels exactly like another old arcade game, *Operation Wolf*.

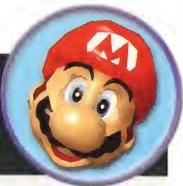


Lob that bad boy at the filthy Hun before he gets his towel down on the beach



Save your bomber before the Germans buy it and slap a BMW sign on the front

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You played *Cannon Fodder*, but wanted more control. Or you just like executing people.

No if...

You cry like a little girl at games that aren't 3D. Or you need a long game for your cash.

You'll love it if you like...

Classic top-down arcade war shooters like *Commandos*, *Ikari Warriors* and *Mercs*.

GRAPHICS

8

Small, well-animated characters and neat villages. Cut-scenes are pointless.

SOUND

7

More speech would've been cool. Nazis shouting "Schisse!", stuff like that...

GAMEPLAY

8

It can be awkward to lock the gun to shoot one way, but it's cracking fun.

LIFE SPAN

6 HOURS

It's short. Maybe without the cut-scenes there'd have been room for more levels?

VERDICT

► That it's not a faux 3D tragedy is cause to celebrate and this classic formula still provides buckets of fun. Definitive versions of 2D standards should be what GBA is all about. That and blowing little guys up.



BEST BIT: The feeling of cutting down enemies. **WORST BIT:** Oh, it's over already? Hope I kept like *GoldenEye* had... the receipt...

SECOND OPINION

► I'd like it better if Scott didn't keep annihilating me at the two-player link-up. He knows all the best places to hide, the cheating little bitch. It's cool. *Mike Jackson*

Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"HUN-BELIEVABLE"

80%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

**Tested****First. Official. Best.**

■ The best thing about cartoons is the senseless violence...



All your favourite characters: Bugs, Daffy and the little yellow bird that won't die

Looney Tunes: Back in Action

This did not fall out of a Xmas cracker, honest...

> Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck star in a new platform game? Urgh! Are you having a giraffe, mate? Yeah, of course I'll review that, thanks guys. Thanks a flippin' lot.

These were the thoughts of Mike as he glanced at the Who's Doing What list, setting out NOM UK's cruel deadlines as dictated by evil work-lord, Kingsley. But to his surprise, *Looney Tunes* isn't that bad. Not bad at all, in fact.

If you're the type to snigger at anything remotely cartoon based, we're not going to try and convert you. Platformers are platformers. You should know the score; some are good, some aren't. This is a good one. We were expecting broken graphics, dodgy physics and crap design.

Instead we got simple but well-made worlds with a nice level of colour and detail, characters that're easy to control even when leaping on small platforms,

and even some sweet tag-team action, with the option to switch between Bugs and Daffy during play.

Bugs is good at jumping, can burrow underground and hypnotise man-toons in his not-so-sexy hula costume, but he can't swim. Daffy can hover and swim, but can't dig at all. They each have other talents that you'll need for each of the individual stages, and discovering ways to combine their skills is simple and intuitive.

There's definitely fun to be had here. And you don't have to be a four-year-old gaming amateur to enjoy it. It's in no way ground-breaking or innovative and a vague liking for *Looney Tunes* characters and their typical humour is probably necessary – there are plenty of wise cracks and one-liners that'll just annoy you if you don't dig the cartoon thing. Well we'll not be biased, nor ashamed – *Looney Tunes* is actually alright. *Mike Jackson*

Game info

Price: £39.99
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Web: www.uk.ea.com
Players: 1
Memory: 2 blocks

Out Now

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

Watching toons blow each other up makes you giggle and you're into platformers.

No if...

The slightest sniff of a cartoon game makes you avoid it like a poisonous mushroom.

You'll love it if you like...

... anything but plumbbers and – like Tim – you hate limbless characters (*Rayman*).

GRAPHICS

7

Solid, colourful and reasonably detailed in places. Satisfyingly glitch-free.

SOUND

6

Would have been better with some of those quirky jingles from the cartoon.

GAMEPLAY

7

Basic controls and highly playable levels – not at all what we expected.

LIFE SPAN

1 WEEK

It won't take too long, unless you're stumped on a search-and-find mission.

VERDICT

> It's great when you get a nice surprise. This isn't in the same league as *Rayman* or *Mario* (obviously), but the easy-to-navigate levels and solid controls make for some simple platforming goodness.



BEST BIT: The characters' individual abilities bring depth to the gameplay.

WORST BIT: The voices – Mark (terrible impressions) could do Daffy better.

SECOND OPINION

> This was very close to going straight in the bin with all the Disney games, but we made Jacko play it despite him crying. And what d'ya know? It's alright! *Kingsley Singleton*

Nintendo

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"SURPRISING"

71

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

The Sims: Bustin' Out

Insult your neighbours, wet the bed... *The Sims* tomfoolery goes portable.

Take control over a Sim, choose their gender, their clothes, star sign and a few personality traits. But if you've played *The Sims* before, you'll instantly notice the big difference here – the point-and-click system is out. Direct control is in.

This means there's no more frustration where your Sim chooses to ignore your frantic clicks on the toilet and takes a leak on the kitchen floor. But that's what gives the Sims character, making them seem like actual people with actual thoughts. Direct control eliminates that illusion.

Making friends in town is simply a task of choosing the right things to say. You are given a list of sentences. Say the right stuff and they'll like you. Insult their appearance or ask them to kiss you and they won't. But it never feels much like a proper conversation because you can often repeat the same sentence to score points with whoever you're chatting up.

Game info	Out Now
Price: £29.99	
Publisher: Electronic Arts	
Web: www.thesims.ea.com	
Players: 1	

You get through life performing tasks on your list, which is built up as you go. You'll find yourself delivering parcels for friends, fixing home appliances or mowing the lawn for your uncle. But while running various errands, you have to make sure your Sim is in good health.

There are eight meters in total, indicating levels for hygiene, speaking, sleep, rest, hunger and all that stuff. As you'd expect, if you get hungry, you should get a meal. If you don't you'll pass out. It's basically a game of charging energy bars. Your Sim won't perform any tasks if he needs the loo or wiffs like a dead skunk.

Everything is nice and simple to do, from completing set tasks to looking after your Sim. If you're not the sort to sit on a game for hours at a time that'd stuff your chances of playing the 'Cube version properly. But this is well suited to playing on the hop and, although simplified, it's still very enjoyable. *Mike Jackson*



Gripped by fear, neither lady Sim nor fat Sim knew where to hide when Inspector Gadget arrived



Violent crime forces everyday pursuits into the cyber domain. Here we sit on a bench, unafraid

Playing it on the go

- Connectivity...** Unlock new tasks to complete.
- Better Back Lit...** Needs some light when it's night.
- Multiplayer...** Now that would've been cool. Oh, well...
- Save...** Will three save slots do ya?
- Extras...** Secret items to grab.

Where we played it...

Standing in the kitchen in a puddle of pee. No-one knows where it came from.



The Sim ladies cause many a crash

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You live your dreams through others – like making a mate date a girl you secretly fancy.

No if...

You're expecting a GBA port of the 'Cube version. This is a very different experience.

You'll love it if you like...

Life simulations or maybe even virtual pets – taking care of your Sim is important.

GRAPHICS

8

It may not be in 3D, but it resembles the GameCube version. Highly detailed.

SOUND

6

Some great night-time ambience, spoilt by annoying music and voice samples.

GAMEPLAY

7

Good for a quick play, but there's not enough to the little guys' personalities.

LIFE SPAN

15 HOURS +

It depends on how much time you spend insulting people and wetting your pants.

VERDICT

> A simplified *Sims* game with enough of the GC version's features to keep fans happy. But we do feel this incarnation has lost some of the sense of freedom and the illusion of infinite possibilities.



BEST BIT: Asking the fit SimValley ladies for a smooch. Go on, love.

WORST BIT: Getting rejected by every lady in the whole town. Doh!

SECOND OPINION

> I like this better than on 'Cube. The things you can say are funny. "Your mum is in jail and your dad's on the dole!" Stuff like that. But not EXACTLY that. *Dean Scott*

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"SIM-PLE FUN"

70%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

**Tested****First. Official. Best.**

■ Fill up that GameBreaker bar and special – fairly unrealistic – things will start happening



■ It might look complex to start with, but if the Americans can understand it you can, too



■ Roll right out of the pocket and try not to let that big fella jump on you. Simple

■ Chuck the pig-skin around down by the sea – you wouldn't get that in *Madden*



■ We're all for choice, but no-one will want to play as the Chargers, surely

NFL Street

Don't understand "I-right, east slot 47 on three"? This could be the game you've been looking for since *Madden* made you cry.

Game info

Price: £39.99

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Web: www.uk.ea.com

Players: 1-4

Memory: 3 blocks

Out
Jan 30th

If you're the sort of person who puts on their best Nikes before nipping down the park

for a kick about then you'll be into *NFL Street*. The team that brought you the stat-tastic *Madden NFL* series have turned their attention to 'keeping it real'. Following the style laid down in EA's cool *NBA Street* titles, *NFL Street* does away with the stats, the full-size teams and the flashy, corporate-owned arenas and strips gridiron down to its core.

But where the b-ball games were fast, end-to-end fun, *NFL Street* is caught between two stools; too basic to appeal to die-hard *Madden* fans, yet too technical to be of any interest to casual players. What's more, it's filled to bursting with the usual dazzling array of customisable features – those that really do nothing to enhance play at all.

The game itself is eight-on-eight football. There's no separation between an Offensive and Defensive unit, this is Iron Man stuff and there are certainly no Special Teams as punts and kick-offs have been dispensed with. A full complement of NFL teams and real-life players are available if you just want to have a quick game, but if you're in it for the

long haul then you'll begin with a bunch of no-hopers, fresh out of the nearest shopping mall.

By completing tasks in a wide variety of different game situations, such as keeping a clean sheet, scoring only passing or running touchdowns, you'll gain points that are spent improving your squad of wannabes. You can also poach players from rival teams.

The action rattles along at an exciting pace. Selecting a play is easy and even if you don't really know what's going on the controls are intuitive enough – and the game loose enough – for you to make it up on the fly.

Offence is great fun. You feel in complete control of the action, throwing and running the ball like a Superbowl winner. But things tend to come

unstuck on Defence; the opposition have an innate ability to break your tackles, find the gaps in your line and make for the endzone. To compound the frustration at giving up another dozen yards your players seem incapable of catching their quarry, so you end up giving in and hoping your Offence can make up for it.

What's almost as frustrating is the player-upgrade system. It's far too clumsy and we didn't even realise it was there for a few games, wondering why our receivers couldn't catch the ball. A *Tiger Woods*-style reminder screen would have been nice.

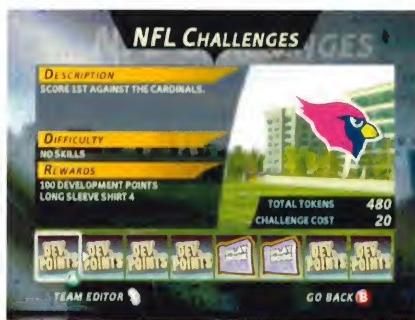
Like any EA game the presentation is polished. The hip-hop soundtrack seems appropriate, but we opted to turn it off when actually playing



■ Watch him go! One mandatory drug test for Armstrong, please



■ Too fat for normal games? Invent one! It's the American way



■ Moves like this will have the Defence worshipping your expensive trainers

Dirty talk

Experience the power of the spoken word in all its glory

■ *NFL Street* is filled with trash talk. It never stops. Luckily a lot of the little phrases are quite funny and it adds a sense of realism to the game, along with a jolt of much-needed comedy. Current office faves include "you're like school on Saturday; no class" or, after the Quarterback gets sacked for a big loss; "hey why don't you make yourself useful; go fetch some water or something". If you're into movies like *The Waterboy* or *The Program* then you'll definitely appreciate this.



Nice elbow pads, bub – try playing rugby

"Control is intuitive and gameplay loose enough for you to make it up on the fly."

a match. Graphically the game is merely okay; oversized players and brutal moves are animated reasonably well, but it's nowhere near as pretty as the latest *Madden* title.

What may just save this game from total obscurity is the multiplayer. It's reminiscent of the classic *NFL Blitz*

games on N64 with over-the-top tackles and humourous banter providing ample fuel for a friendly afternoon's head-to-head. The only problem is that you have to play through the one-player stuff in order to unlock the better arenas and goodies. First it giveth then it taketh away. **Dominic Wint**

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

The *Madden* experience is just that little bit too complicated or geeky for you to get in to.

No if...

You can't quote complete rosters from the last ten Superbowl teams.

You'll love it if you like...

NFL Blitz, *NHL Hitz* or *Red Card*. It's a game requiring minimal knowledge.

GRAPHICS

7

Chunky players and detailed arenas, but not amazing by any stretch.

SOUND

7

A decent hip-hop soundtrack that fits the action and some excellent trash talk.

GAMEPLAY

6

Veers between great fun and utterly frustrating to the point of violence.

LIFE SPAN

2 MONTHS

The one-player mode is tough and should keep you occupied for a while.

VERDICT

> *NFL Street* doesn't know what it wants to be. It's a pared-down *Madden* with over-the-top thrills and spills, but still requires a degree of gridiron knowledge. *NFL Blitz* devotees will have a blast in multiplayer.



BEST BIT: Multiplayer's a good laugh, especially with four gridiron fans.

WORST BIT: Chasing after a running back with little hope of catching him.

SECOND OPINION

> *NFL Blitz* was a regular lunchtime fave back in the day at NOM and this is similar, but the one-player action gets tedious after a couple of broken plays. **Tim Street**

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"NO NFL TREAT"

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

67%

Smaller reviews. For

Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion

Publisher: THQ
Release date: Out now
Price: £19.99
Players: 1
Game Save: 1 block



It may sound harsh, but Jimmy Neutron hasn't been in a good game. He hasn't even starred in a half-decent game and *Jet Fusion* does absolutely nothing to buck that trend. Buy *Super Mario Sunshine* instead, that's only 20 quid now as well.

Still here? You must be a *Neutron* fan then, so this is for you. In his latest school project Jimmy decides to build a machine that brings books to life, to save him from actually having to read. But when he feeds his favourite book into the machine things go haywire and Jimmy is somehow transported into the world of top secret agent, Jet Fusion.

But Jet's been shrunk to the size of a doll and stuck in a box. He can only help Jimmy by telling him where to go and what to do. As if Fusion's help wasn't enough the levels are full of signs, arrows and the help of Goddard, Jimmy's robotic sidekick.

The puzzles are simple, the graphics are bland, the controls are limp. Only the most severe *Neutron* head would consider this over a number of superior platformers. Basically, this hurts to play.



Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"PAINFUL"

37%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Terminator 3

Publisher: Atari
Release date: Out now
Price: £24.99
Players: 1
Game Save: 10 blocks



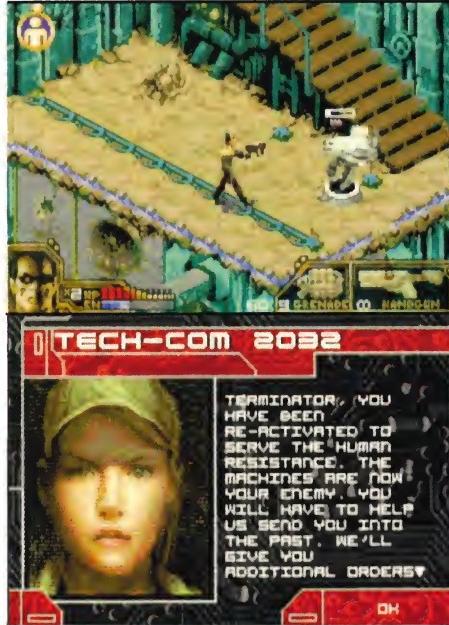
Playing as a bad-ass killing machine with big guns in the middle of a nuclear war should make good games material whichever way you look at it. The concept is simple – run around loads, shoot lots of bullets, throw grenades and make plenty of meaty explosions.

Think *Protector* (or *Contra*). Same concept, simple gameplay, lots of fun. *Terminator 3* uses a 3D perspective instead of a basic, side-scrolling one, which is good news if the controls are up to the task. Sadly they're not.

Trying to shoot someone without getting shot yourself is made unnecessarily difficult because you need to toggle between run, walk and strafe modes to get your little guy to do what you want. And changing your weapon is just as awkward.

The result? You get a cap in the rear end while you waste time toggling control modes and weapon sets. It takes a lot of getting used to.

The levels are dull-looking and you might have a job seeing what's happening on a standard GBA. If you are a fan of the films, even the third one, don't expect to relive the adrenaline rushes in this mediocre, disappointing GBA effort.



Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"AWKWARD"

41%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

SpongeBob Squarepants: Battle for Bikini Bottom

Publisher: THQ
Release date: Out now
Price: £24.99
Players: 1
Game Save: 10 blocks

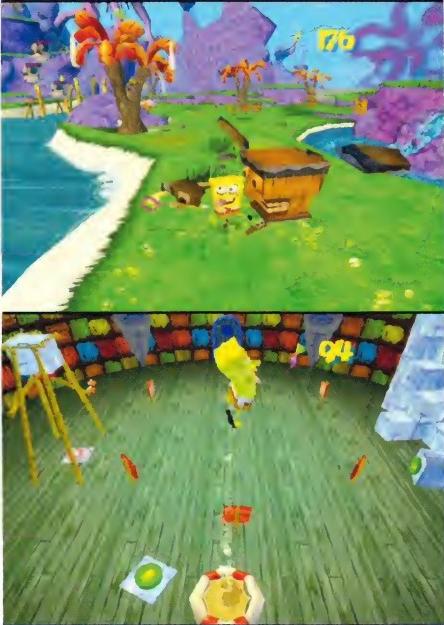


Battle for Bikini Bottom presents a problem. It's marginally better than *Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion*, but it's five quid more expensive. Which Nickelodeon game do you pick? Umm... you do still remember that *Mario Sunshine*'s £20, right?

What we've got here is another generic platformer trading on the name of a popular Saturday morning kids' show. And when the best you can say about a game is 'some bits are alright' you know it's time to start looking for your kicks elsewhere.

You don't just get to play as SpongeBob, you'll get control over a number of characters like Sandy Cheeks and Patrick, each one has different skills that you need to employ to progress through the levels. All the stages are based around areas in the cartoon like Bikini Bottom and Jellyfish Fields, but it's all so low-res and blurry that everything looks plain bad.

The controls are okay and there's a healthy number of moves to learn, but it's just so mundane that you'll need to love SpongeBob like Mike J loves Wu Tang and KFC to have the patience to plough through this.



Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"ORDINARY"

46%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

your eyes to savour.

Hot Wheels World Race

Publisher: THQ
Release date: Out now
Price: £19.99
Players: 1-4
Memory Card: 15 blocks



■ It's as if *Hot Wheels World Race* was developed in an alternate universe where the presence of *F-Zero GX* hasn't been detected and *XGRA* is the best-selling cure for a hacking cough. This apes both GameCube's latest futuristic racers, but it stalls on the starting grid.

World Race's big idea is the ability to do tricks mid air in order to build up your Nitrox boost. They aren't good tricks. As usual, competing in the Championship races and doing well unlocks new cars, new tracks and pictures for the gallery. Where do they get these crazy ideas?

The tracks want to be like *F-Zero's* but they're lacklustre to say the least and the vehicles don't have the required speed to make the twists and loops anything other than ordinary. What's more the cars feel almost weightless and they handle badly. This is not a good recipe for an intense driving experience.

As with *Jimmy Neutron*, *Hot Wheels World Race* is released at a budget price, but that's still no reason to add it to your collection. You can get *XGRA* for the same number of coins and last year's *XGIII* is still preferable to this.



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"OUTDATED"

26 %

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Mission Impossible: Operation Surma

Publisher: Atari
Release date: Out now
Price: £29.99
Players: 1
Game Save: Cart save



■ The worst thing about this game is the way the missions are structured. It's the same as the *Mission Impossible* game on N64 where your tasks are updated on-the-fly. The problem is that the game gives you no clues, so your progress is largely down to frustrating trial and error.

Add to that the uninspired environments, strange A.I. and the poor character animation and you're left with a game that looks like it belongs back on the Game Boy Color.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to save the world from destruction at the hands of a crazed organisation. As usual you're equipped with all of the fancy gadgets that no good spy should be without, including sticky bombs, scanners, tracker devices and a range of disguises that let you delve deeper into the criminal underworld.

Your missions are overseen by Luther, who regularly radios in to give you advice and to update your mission objectives. A helpful map is available at the press of a button and you'll need to refer to it constantly throughout your missions in order to succeed.

While there's definitely some enjoyment to be found in small doses, we spent far too long dying, restarting and trying again to have any real fun.



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"CONFUSING"

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

SSX 3

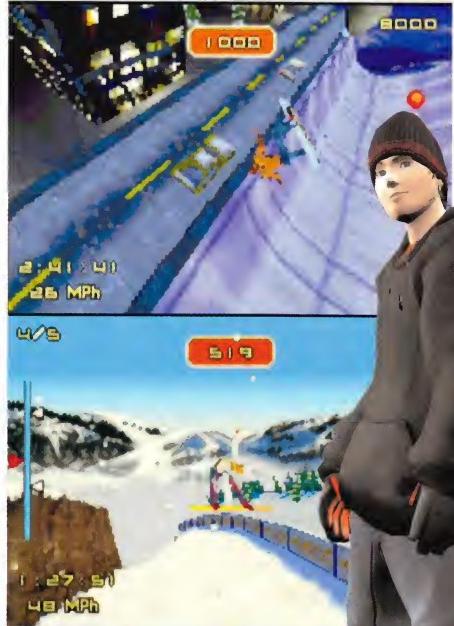
Publisher: EA
Release date: Out now
Price: £29.99
Players: 1
Game Save: Cart save



■ No matter how hard you try and believe it, how many times you sit stroking it and wishing to the heavens that it would be, your GBA is not a GameCube. It's just not. Fact. Face up to it and move on. This means it's always disappointing when games are released that try and mimic what's been done on Nintendo's home console. Games like *SSX 3*.

Behind the glossy exterior, the (relatively) detailed 3D characters, the high-quality soundtrack and the fact that all the modes you enjoyed on 'Cube have been shoehorned into this tiny cartridge; this is a bad game. Why? Because the poor little handheld just can't cope.

SSX 3 on GBA has a long list of characters and a deep and challenging Conquer the Mountain mode where you have to square off against four hardcore snowboarding opponents and batter down a series of increasingly treacherous slopes in order to gain cash and boost your attributes. But it's slow, it's sluggish, the controls are unresponsive and it's a real chore to play. That equals no fun. Gaming is not something you have to endure, it's a thing you do to relax. This isn't relaxing, it's just hard work.



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"TOO SLOW"

49 %

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

"No! Like this!"

You've bought them, now tell us how you'd change 'em.

Mario Kart: Double Dash

94%?! You must be kidding! (said some of you)

■ The tracks are too short and get boring quickly. The characters should have more than one special item and more characters should be unlockable. How about Shadow Mario? He would be really cool to use.
John Seabrook, via email

■ The battle arenas are way too small, I liked the big ones from *Mario Kart 64*.
James Stock, Norwich

■ It's a great game, but not hard enough! I completed all the races within three days and beating the staff ghosts is the only hard part. Maybe if there were more cups or harder difficulty settings it'd be more of a challenge. What about 200cc?
Jamie Doran, via email

■ I don't want to kiss your butts, *NOM UK* guys, but the GameCube and Cookie Land battle arenas ain't that good. There should be more arenas like Pipe Plaza and the *Super Mario Bros.* ones.
Anon, via email

■ This just seems to be an updated version of the series with two players in a kart (which personally I reckon is lame) and there are only 16 tracks. 150cc seems like 50cc and it gets boring quickly.
Kav, London

■ You can't dodge Red Shells any more and the Blue Shell is just plain mean. Multiplayer isn't as great as the N64 – at least the arenas had enough space to hide around corners.
Joe, via email



Star Wars: Rebel Strike

■ I think that *Star Wars: Rebel Strike* was disappointing. It needed more flight levels because the on-foot stages were shockingly bad. It also needed a lot more missions out of the films like in *Rogue Leader*. The Jedi training and Endor forest levels were just appalling.
Andrew Donaldson, Edinburgh



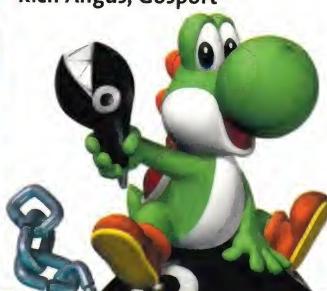
F-Zero GX

■ It is the best GameCube racer and a 100% improvement over *F-Zero X*. I would only improve it by making Story mode a bit longer. It's too easy to complete.
Gareth Wright, Leeds

■ The Story mode is far too tough and too short! Next time it needs to be about 30 smaller missions, each slowly progressing in difficulty.
The Atom Smasher, Oxted

Mario Party 4

■ This game is actually really boring unless you're with some mates. The single-player mode should have a story line to keep my eyelids from dropping.
Rich Angus, Gosport



What's your verdict?

"Where's Augusta in *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004*?"

What about a Design-a-Course mode? A Ryder Cup competition? *Tiger Woods 2005* should have more commentators and what about some classic golfers, too? Please put Seve in!"

Stephen Staveley, via email

Email your improvements to the latest GameCube games to tim.street@emap.com
Remember, thumbs up or down doesn't cut it. We want to know how you'd make them better.

"Mario & Luigi is pure genius. Now we just need an original Mario platformer on the GBA."

Daniel Davies, Southampton

Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga

■ *Mario & Luigi* came into my life like a breath of fresh air. It's stupendously good. Brilliant story line, classic characters and enough cheeky nods towards past Nintendo successes to make Mario's cap fall off. What a game. This is what my GBA's been waiting for.

Paul Southern, London

■ There's absolutely nothing to say about this game other than, it's perfect. I knew Nintendo couldn't resist releasing a new Mario game for the GBA and here it is with bells on. I will play this and play this until my thumbs die. Excellent.

Thom Walker, Manchester

■ Why did it take so long for Nintendo to get this onto the shop shelves? It's a gaming work of art. All of the references to Nintendo games of the past are dead clever. I think that this is the best game to be released on GBA so far and I hope it's a sign of things to come.

Wayne Stevens, Luton



"Yet another classic to add to the Mario back catalogue of gaming greatness."

Duncan Francis, Edinburgh

Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire

■ I finished *Pokémon Ruby* a couple of months ago (ha, I bet I did it before you did), but I was a little disappointed that they cut out the night parts. I still think it was massive and the best GBA game I've got.

Samuel Butcher,
Milton Keynes



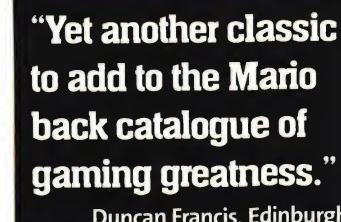
Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising

"After reading about *Advance Wars 2* in issue 131 I couldn't wait to get my hands on a copy. I would recommend it to anyone, it's just so... great. I haven't really stopped playing, only to go to school and to write this letter. I've got to be quick though, I'm up against Lash in a minute."

Mr Q. Mills, Salisbury

■ Surely it can't be so hard to produce a game of this depth and scale on GameCube. I've spent many hours ploughing through *Advance Wars 2* and it never seems to get boring. I wouldn't tire of this sort of game, no matter what they do to it. Let's have some more.

Dan Faddon, Wiltshire



Banjo Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge

■ I recently bought *BK: Grunty's Revenge* and right from the start it was apparent that the whole game was an almost identical downgraded version of the original on N64. Everything from the sound to the design of the levels. Aside from that it was one of the shortest and easiest games I've ever played. It only took me seven hours to complete.

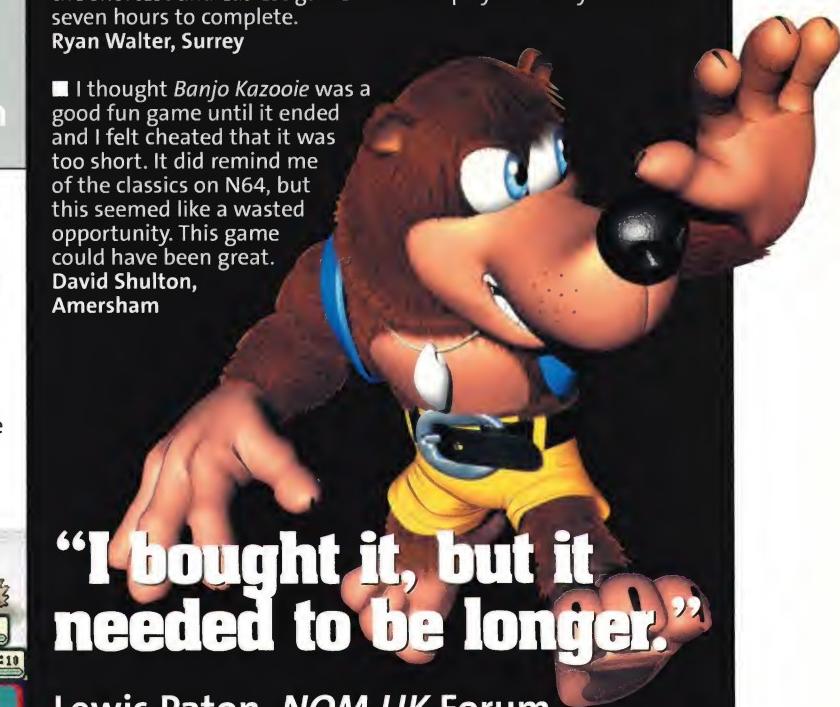
Ryan Walter, Surrey

■ I thought *Banjo Kazooie* was a good fun game until it ended and I felt cheated that it was too short. It did remind me of the classics on N64, but this seemed like a wasted opportunity. This game could have been great.

David Shulton,
Amersham

■ I bought it, but it needed to be longer.

Lewis Paton, NOM UK Forum



TG Rally

I played and loved *V-Rally 3* on Game Boy Advance, but I reckon that this just tops it with the amazing controls and huge variety in the courses. It's the most fun I've had on my GBA and you were right on the money when you said it was great for a quick blast.

Pete Williams, Birmingham

I think this is a good game, but what would have made it great is at least some recognition of real cars – the ones in the game look a bit like boxes on wheels. I reckon the sequel should have some real car licences in there to make things more interesting.

Ian Killan, Peterborough



Email your improvements to the latest GBA releases to Dom at dominic.wint@emap.com. Remember, thumbs up or down doesn't cut it. We want to know how you'd make them better.

Masterclass

Busting the hardest parts

How to...

Get medieval on the hardest bosses that Middle-Earth has to throw at you

It'll be game, set and match to Frodo and company before you know it.



I King of the Dead

■ Boss: King of the Dead

■ Character: Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas

Tactics... Use Aragorn for this fight. The King will stomp over and swing his sword at you three times. Parry all of these hits. After he has swung three times he'll take a quick breather. At this point start attacking him with a few quick combos then parry his attacks again.

If he sinks into the ground, press **R** to stab him. When his health is slightly depleted he'll appear on the wall and summon his minions. Stay at the back and shoot a single arrow at one of them to get their attention. Hack them to pieces when they come over and repeat for the rest. When they're all dead the

King will attack you, repeat the process until he summons some archers. Use arrows to quickly kill these.

Beat the king again and this time he'll appear by his statue and blow wind at you. Hide behind the rock and after each blast, fire a charged arrow at him then duck for cover again.

After the third wind attack the King will attack with his sword again only this time he swings at you five times. Parry these and when he pauses give him some back. Repeat this process and after a few more summons and wind blowing attacks he'll die.



2 The Black Gate pt. I

■ Boss: Mouth of Sauron ■ Character: Gandalf, Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas

Tactics... It's best to use either Aragorn or Gandalf for this level, but it's fairly simple. When the boss crouches it means he is about to perform an unblockable attack. Don't give him a chance. Lay into him using Orc Hewer.

You should be able to dominate him easily and reduce his health in no time. Don't bother using ranged attacks just use quick combos and you should be able to keep him pressed back until he dies without receiving a single hit yourself.



3 The Black Gate pt. II

■ Boss: Ringwraiths
■ Character: Gandalf, Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas

Tactics... It's best to use either Aragorn or Gandalf for this level. As soon as the fight starts, run to the edge and grab a pike. Fling it at the nearest Ringwraith. Keep your eye on the health bars of your friends. If one of them is getting battered run over to them so that their health recharges.

Use the nearest pike and fling this at the Ringwraith attacking your comrade. Switch to your arrows, target the weakest boss and let loose until it is dead. Repeat this tactic for the rest of them. You should always concentrate on the one giving your friends a hard time.

If you're feeling brave you could always try attacking the back of one of them, but be careful as they might turn around and swat you like a fly.



4 Shelob's Lair

■ Boss: Shelob ■ Character: Sam

Tactics... This is the hardest boss in the game. At the start, fire a fully charged arrow at Shelob to attract her attention. Shelob will attack with her pincers. You can block these normally. The best time to attack her is the second before she strikes.

If you land a blow she will be knocked backwards, allowing you to follow through with a combo. Once she's on her feet you will have to block again to avoid damage. After hitting her a few times she'll hop onto the wall and send some baby spiders down to fight you. Stay at the edge, as far from her as possible. If necessary shoot arrows to

attract the babies over. Use a fierce attack to knock them over and stab them in the belly. When the last one dies, start running as Shelob will launch herself from the wall. If you avoid this attack you will have a few seconds to smack her about. Repeat the process.

After you cut off her leg, use the invisible cloak to avoid her rampage. After dispatching more baby spiders you get to attack her again. You will probably be low on health by now, so be extra careful to time your attacks and block her advances. Repeat this until she dies and don't feel too annoyed if you die a few times – it's a tough one.



5 Cirith Ungol

■ Boss: Orc Boss ■ Character: Sam

Tactics... Don't bother fighting the Orc Boss straight away, back off to the side of the room where you'll find a javelin. Hit [Z] to pick one up and fling it at the boss.

This will break his shield. Now run across to the other side of the room and grab another javelin from the rack there. Fling this at the boss and he should be stunned for a few seconds. Now attack. Use your most powerful combos and lay into him.

After a few hits he'll come to his senses and get another shield. Repeat this process until the sucker is dead. If you get to a javelin rack and the boss is on the far side you'll have enough time to launch two javelins from the same spot.



6 Crack of Doom

■ Boss: Gollum ■ Character: Frodo

Tactics... You can't hurt Gollum with normal attacks, so try to knock him away. Parry his attacks or run to avoid them. If you hit him with a speed attack he'll jump to the right. Hit him with a fierce attack and he'll jump to the left.

You can only hit him when he's crouching or on all fours. This won't damage him, but this is how you move him around. Your aim is to knock the little beast off the edge. The best way to get him near the edge is to stand by it – you can't fall off. If you get him onto the bridge part it's even easier. Attack him until he's teetering on the edge then

kick him off. When he is grabbing the ledge, plunge your sword downwards as if performing a finishing move and he'll drop off.

After you do this twice a Red Health Vial will appear on the right. After the third time, lava appears, but you can avoid this by staying at the edge. Knock him off a few more times and the platform will start to break apart. Health seems to show up when you need it, so keep your eyes open for this. Stay at the edge for the rest of the fight to completely avoid all the stuff falling into the middle. After knocking Gollum off for the final time the game is over.



Rule Bob-omb Blast mode

Bob-omb Blast mode is the best battle mode in *Double Dash* and with these tips, you can humiliate your mates every time.

HOW TO...

blast your
mates into
next week

JUST KEEP GOING



Never slow down to a standstill. A moving target is harder to hit. Stop and you'll be giving your opponents a prime scoring opportunity. If you need to turn round in a tight space, it's better to power slide and bounce off the walls a little.

LOOK TO THE FUTURE



If you spot an opponent driving across the screen in the distance, don't throw a bomb directly at them – by the time it explodes, they won't be there. Throw it a little ahead of them, timing it so they'll drive into the blast.

SNIPER KILL



Hold the 3D Stick forward when throwing a bomb and you'll hurl it much further than normal. With precision aiming you'll also be able to hit targets in the distance. Use this method to help keep your distance from opponents.

TACTICAL PURSUIT



When chasing another player, never follow too closely. If they have a bomb, they could drop it behind them and you'll be nailed like a kipper. It's better to hang back a little and throw bombs, holding \textcircled{B} to lob them far ahead.

DRIVE-BY AMBUSH



You can drop bombs behind you by pulling \textcircled{B} . This is great for getting an opponent off your tail, but it's also a great ambush technique. If you spot someone very nearby, drive past them, dropping bombs in their path.

THE NIPPY NIPPER



It's much better to use the smaller, nimble carts. They're easier to control, with a quicker response that can get you out of trouble and are smaller targets. If you still want speed, use the Barrel Train. It's light AND quick.

DUAL POWER



Remember you have TWO racers on your kart and each can hold five bombs. If one character's hands are full, swap them. But remember to have your best-equipped racer ready for battle when there are incoming players.

2 Arena tips

The basic arenas – the Cookie Land, Nintendo GameCube and Tilt-a-Kart stages – are quite basic. Anything can happen. The other three stages – Block City, Pipe Plaza and Luigi's Mansion – are a more complex, allowing

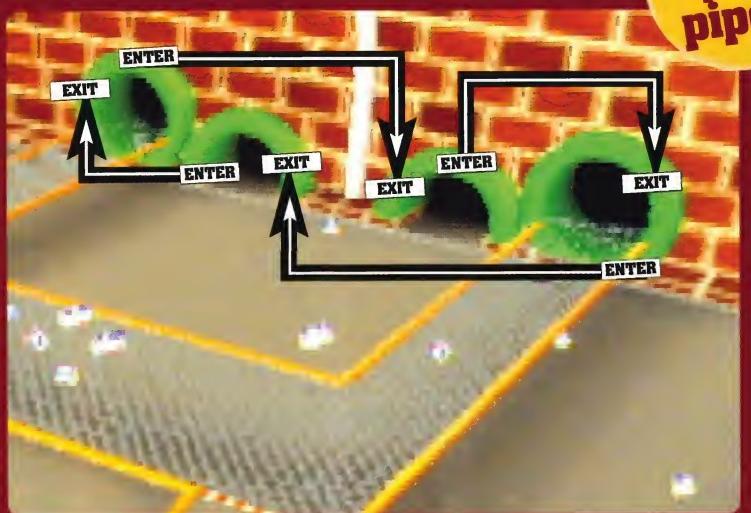
anyone with skill to devise some winning tricks. Bob-Omb Battle is all about skill, judgement and a little luck, but get to know these tips and you'll be well on your way to ruling your mates.

**Know
your
pipes!**

PIPE PLAZA



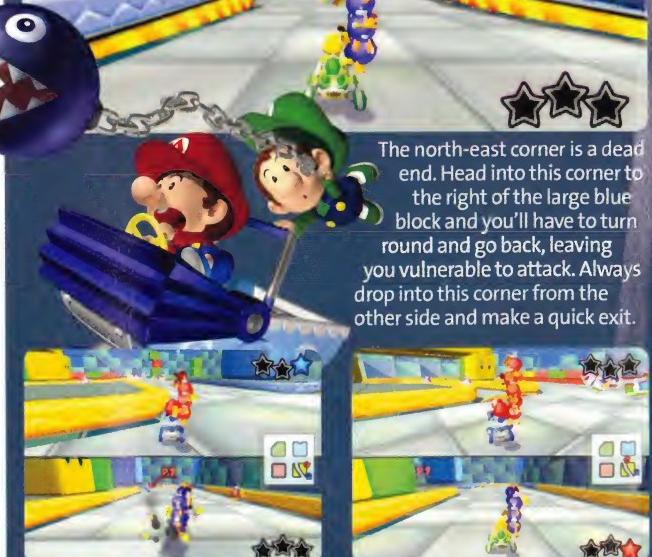
Predict players' movements ahead of time. If you see them heading towards a pipe, it's likely they'll enter it. Learn which pipe they'll pop out of and quickly throw or drop a bomb there. With good timing, this is a sure-fire winner.



BLOCK CITY



The north-east corner is a dead end. Head into this corner to the right of the large blue block and you'll have to turn round and go back, leaving you vulnerable to attack. Always drop into this corner from the other side and make a quick exit.



Equally, if you spot any opponents heading into the dead end, get there quick and launch an ambush while they're turning round. Just be careful not to be hit by counter fire. There are many item blocks there and they'll have plenty of ammo.



Explosions on the lower level will hit players on the upper level and vice-versa. Keep this in mind at all times! You can launch bombs at players above you and score, and you can lay bombs on the upper level to hit players below.

LUIGI'S MANSION



It's vital on this stage to keep a close eye on your radar. If you spot someone about to enter one of the small hallways, throw some bombs down there to catch them out. That way they'll bounce off the wall and hit your unsuspecting opponent before they can escape.



Despite our advice not to stop at any time, you might be able to score some cheeky points by stopping on the roof and throwing bombs down the hole. Get a move on if somebody comes up to your level though.

Viewtiful combo building

HOW TO...

rack up obscenely large scores

Viewtiful Joe is a non-stop orgy of cartoon violence, but beneath the chaos lies a route to massive scores and easy victories...

1 Rock On

The Rock On technique is great for building up massive combos and it's a sure way to avoid taking significant damage. The key is to wait until a bunch of enemies are near and use Slow just before they attack.

Push **B** or **A** to avoid the skull symbol, dodging enemy attacks. This will dizzy your opponent and mark them with a pink targeting reticle.

All of your attacks are now much more powerful and you'll easily be able to punch or kick enemies into each other. As long as you keep Slow pressed you can move from one to another and link kills for a massive score. Press Mach Speed to move faster between foes and uppercut the ground-based enemies so they hit those in the air.



2 Rock On - target the weak

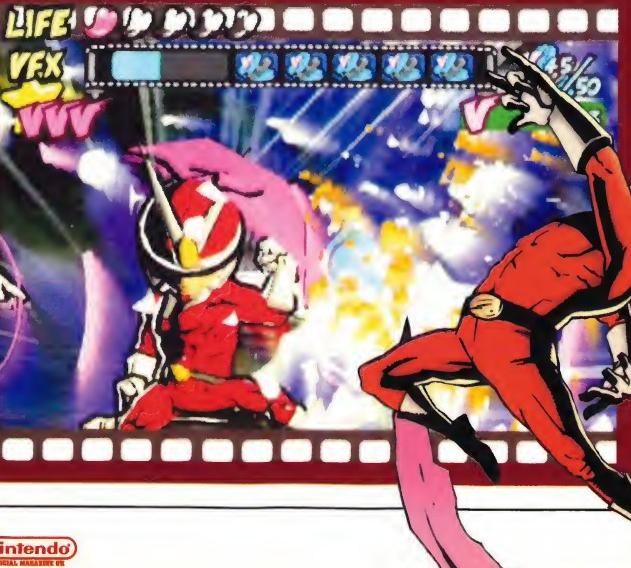
Another cunning ploy to use when rocking on is to get your initial target lock-on against the very weakest enemy on the screen.

This way you'll easily be able to take them out and then move onto the tougher foes, who'll also have a targeting reticle.



3 Rock On - Zoom

While rocking on, try to Zoom-in. You'll see less of the screen, but every blow will be more powerful. Zoom-in and -out whenever you want and keep linking attacks. It's great for seeing enemies before wading in.



4 Rock On - slide attack

When you have a group of enemies bunched together, try pressing **B** and kick while slowed to unleash a sliding attack – this will send the whole group flying.

It's just as effective if done while

in the air and you can usually perform two attacks as you slowly fall. By pressing Zoom, this attack becomes even more effective as Joe spins quickly, destroying everything he hits on the way down.

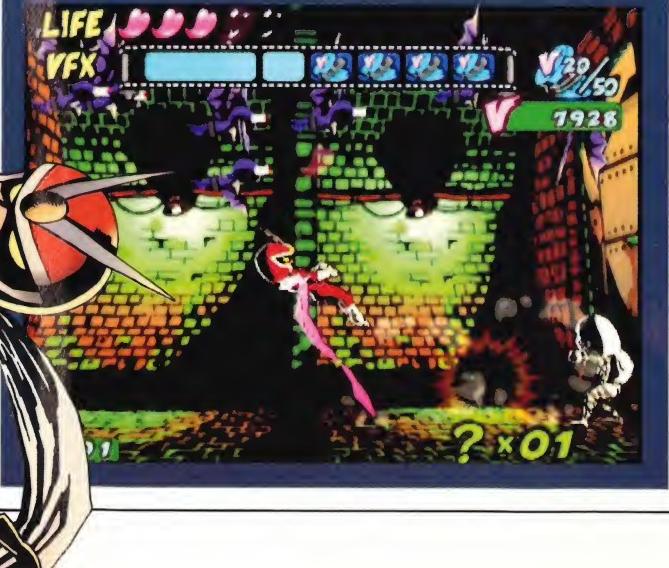


5 Rock On - Ukemi

This is Viewtiful Joe's get out of jail free card as it can stop you taking damage at critical times and recovers lost health. Therefore it's definitely worth buying from the shop if you get the chance.

If you've just been knocked over by an enemy immediately Zoom-In. If you manage to press Zoom before Joe hits the deck he'll do an extravagant backflip, land on his feet and you'll recover one heart portion of health. Because the timing is so important it's much easier to perform it if you're in Slow mode, as this naturally gives you more time to react.

Another definite advantage to using this technique is that you'll retain a perfect V score and if you're trying to unlock the secret characters, this is vital, believe us.



1Ups that are too easy

HOW TO...
bounce all the way to 99 lives

Mario Advance 4 can have you dropping 20 or more lives on a single stage – but that won't matter if you've got 99 to burn.



On the second level of World One, there are pipes spitting out Goombas. Change to Raccoon Mario and find one.



Wait next to the pipe until it spits out three Goombas. Now jump on the first of the three Goombas, holding jump as you hit it to bounce high into the air.



Tap jump to hover down and bounce on the next Goomba. As the pipe continues to make Goombas, keep bouncing on them until you get 1Ups.



Don't touch the floor and you'll keep earning lives. This trick works anywhere you can bounce on multiple enemies without touching the floor.

Sneaky dice thief

A sneaky trick to building your strongest monster collection.

Each time you win a fight in *Yu-Gi-Oh! Duendice Monsters*, you'll be rewarded with a die. However, the die you get is chosen at random. If you're after a specific one, find out who has it in the Characters section, then play that character in the Free Duel mode until you win.



HOW TO...
Nab your monster of choice

Survive Pearl Harbor

Keeping your gun fully primed for battle.

Ammo doesn't grow on trees in *Medal of Honor: Infiltrator*. But you can get a refill at the Weapon Set Change areas. You don't even have to change weapons. Always reload your gun before grabbing ammo packs – it'll free up more space in your backpack, making full use of the ammo you find.



HOW TO...
make the most of every bullet



Wanna unlock the stars of *Double Dash*? Or stalk the streets as Snoop in *True Crime*? Look out below...

Official Cheats

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!

Every secret unleashed

The *NOM UK* copy of *Double Dash* has been well and truly thrashed into submission by now, so take a look below at what we've already unlocked. It'll take a while, but with the ultra *Mario Kart* skills we know all you readers possess, you can unlock loads of cool extras in *Double Dash*, too. Fancy a spin in that gold Parade car? Check this out...

Unlock...	Get Gold in...
Luigi's Green Fire Kart	Mushroom Cup, 50cc
Daisy's Bloom Coach Kart	Flower Cup, 50cc
Koopa Paratroopa's Para Wing Kart	Star Cup, 50cc
Bullet Blaster Kart	Special Cup, 50cc
Baby Luigi's Rattle Buggy	Mushroom Cup, 100cc
Waluigi Racer	Flower Cup, 100cc
Special Cup	Star Cup, 100cc
Toad, Toadette and the Toad Kart	Special Cup, 100cc
Luigi's Mansion Battle Arena	Mushroom Cup, 150cc
Birdo's Turbo Birdo Kart	Flower Cup, 150cc
Diddy Kong's Barrel Train	Star Cup, 150cc
All Cup Tour	Special Cup, 150cc
Mirror Mode	All Cup Tour, 150cc
Toadette Kart	Mushroom Cup, Mirror mode
Tilt-A-Kart Battle Arena	Flower Cup, Mirror mode
King Boo, Petey Piranha and the Piranha Pipes Kart	Star Cup, Mirror mode
King Boo's King Pipes Kart	Special Cup, Mirror mode
Gold Parade Kart	All Cup Tour, Mirror mode
Alternative Start/Ending screen	All Cups



Get Gold in the All Cup Tour and you can play the reversed courses in Mirror mode. But if you're really lazy, just put a mirror next to the TV



Beat the Special Cup and unlock All Cup Tour. Ouch...



Win the Flower Cup in Mirror mode and get tilting



Win the All Cup Tour in Mirror mode and you'll unlock this beauty which looks like an, umm... golden dune buggy

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

Unlock everything

Start a new game and enter a specific word as your number-plate. Make sure

you're holding the **L** and **R** buttons when you hit the OK tab.

To play as...

The password is...

A fat (sorry – big boned) biker	HAWG
A dirty, smoking donkey with a human posture	JASS
A blood-covered Chinese butcher	PHAM
A hard-hitting commando bloke	M1K3
An excessively hairy-chested boxer	BRUZ
A female punk	BOOB
A tattoo-covered lady	TATS
A rich, gold-chain wearing dude	MRFU
A bad-ass gangster you wouldn't wanna mess with	TFAN
A very uncool male punk	MNKY
An undead demon with a serious skin problem	J1MM
A mach-daddy pimp	P1MP
Good ol' Officer George	FATT
A sharp-shooting S.W.A.T. team member	SWAT
A grubby, bearded street bum	BOOZ
A whup-ass, Chinese martial artist	HARA
Officer Johnson	FUZZ
The chief officer	B1G1
Your lovely lady partner	ROSA
Your lovely partner in her underwear. Nice.	HURT_M3



You want to play as Snoop Dogg, don't ya? During play, pause, go to the city map and press
**R, L, □, △,
 ▶, ▷, ▽, ▷,
 Z, Y, X, Z.**



Now quit to the Title screen, load your game and select Dogg Patrol on the top-left of the Mission Select screen. Snoop's yours, fo' shizzle ma' nizzle.

NEW WAYS TO PLAY HOW TO GET THE MOST FUN OUT OF YOUR GAMES

THE METHOD: SPEED RUN, F-ZERO GX

At the end of the usual high-speed, near-death racing, the post-race results screen tells you the highest speed you reached during the race. Have you ever wondered how fast the ships can be pushed? That's what this is all about. Take turns with a mate to see who can get the highest top-speed in Time Attack mode. This is even more fun if you have your own custom-built ships to burn around in.

THE SETTINGS:

Two or more players: You can do this challenge in Versus mode and compete together, but we prefer to take turns, just so we get to play in full-screen mode.

Time Attack: Or you can do it in Practice mode. It's up to you whether or not you add computer opponents, but the challenge is to get the highest speed possible and they only get in the way.

Any Ship: It's your choice. You can race different standard or custom-made ships to test your engines, or use identical ships for a straight-up test of raw skill.

Who played: NOM UK's Kingsley and Mike.

What happened: Mike picks the Aeropolis Multiplex course and Kingsley chooses the ship they'll both use – NOM UK favourite, the Blue Falcon of course. Mike goes first and blisters round the course, hitting a top speed of 1,870km/h. Woah! Could Kingsley match that? He tried. He failed. 1,653km/h is all he could manage. No good, Kippers.



Okay, Snoopy, turn in Charlie Brown and the rest of the gang and I won't shoot your legs off

The Great Nintendo Challenge

Have you got what it takes to be a Nintendo game ninja?



NOM UK
is watching

CHEAT!
• NO MESSING ABOUT
• NO IMPORT GAMES
• NO CHEAT DISCS

Every generation has one; a moment they'll remember all their lives. For some it's the Kennedy assassination, for others the moon landing or the fall of the Berlin Wall. For Mike it's playing *Mario 64* for the first time. But now there's

something new that'll stick with you for ever. Remember where you were. Remember what you were doing when you read this: the *Wind Waker* mail-sorting challenge record has fallen. If you haven't yet fainted, read on...



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

Names: Dave Hall (pictured) and Alex Matthews

Score: 34 letters

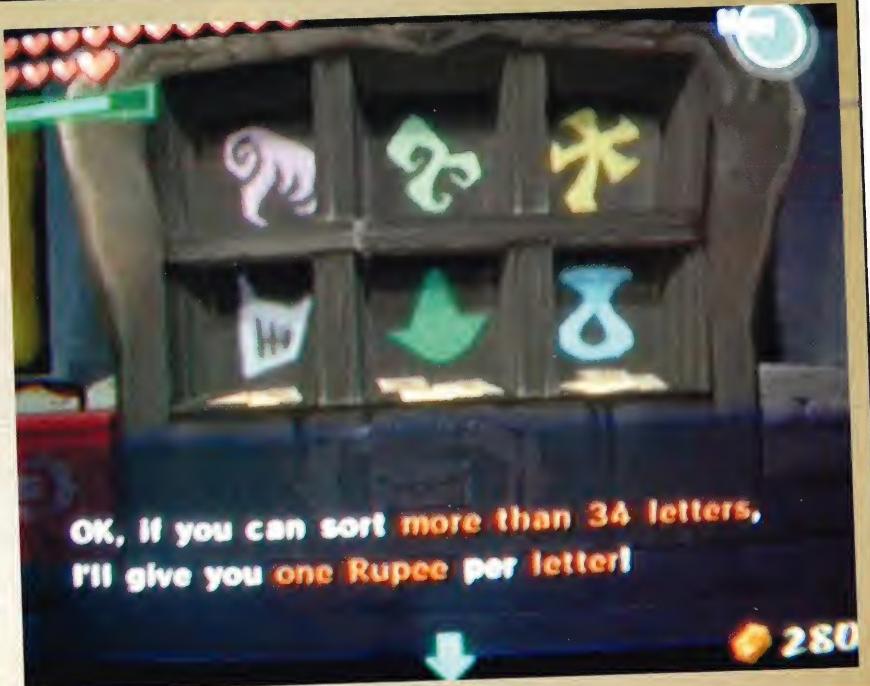
What happened? The day started just like any other. It was cold. It was dark. It may

have been raining. Little did we know that somewhere, speeding towards the glittering spires of NOM UK was the news we'd been waiting for ever since the unholy triumvirate of Dean Hailstone, John Zeepvat and the dark lord himself, Dave Every, smashed the letter-sorting challenge in issue 133.

It had been done. The record had fallen... on two counts. Tim gave everyone a half day. Dave Hall was quite laid back about it: "all you need for this challenge is good reactions, a whole lot of luck and a great thumb surgeon for when the button bashing is over". Alex Matthews used a mixture of "lots of practice" and memorising the boxes so he only had to look at the letters. Respect the skills.

The popular opinion at NOM UK is that the pair were abandoned shortly after birth and raised by a team of feral postmen, only returning to civilisation when their horrifyingly large game-hands began scaring the posties. But that's just speculation.

Can this score be beaten? We dare to dream...



TG RALLY (GBA)

Name: Kingsley Singleton
Score: 2:00:20

What happened? We thought it was about time there were a few GBA challenges on these pages, so we've kicked off with two of the best titles in recent months. First up is

NEW CHALLENGE!



TG Rally and a score so eminently beatable you should thrash the wheels off it in no time. If you've got a GB Player, you can snap your TV, but those whose gaming is confined to a three-inch screen will need either a darkened room (SP) or some patience (GBA).

POKÉMON PINBALL (GBA)

Name: Tim Street
Score: 142,220,500

What happened? Tim's massive score (just short of his monthly pay cheque) will be hard to better. But with the popularity of this bumper-thumping, critter-collecting corker we're sure there'll be no shortage of entries. Eagle-eyed readers may notice that there are only three entries on Tim's scoreboard. This is because Editorio never plays a game more than three times before chucking it in the bin and buying a fresh one.

NEW CHALLENGE!



Make sure to get your entries in by January 26th if you want to be in next month's *NOM UK*

BEAT THIS!

The Wind Waker, mail-sorting challenge. Dave Hall and Alex Matthews; 34 letters

NEW CHALLENGE!

F-Zero GX, Emerald Cup, Green Plant, Intersection, best lap. Mike; 0:45.722

F-Zero GX, Sapphire Cup, Port Town, Long Pipe, best lap. John Zeepvat; 0:40.295

F-Zero GX, top speed at Aeropolis Multiplex. John Zeepvat; 2,993km/h

NEW CHALLENGE!

Mario Kart: DD!!, Time Trial, Baby Park, best lap. Richard Hedges; 0:09:930

Star Wars Rogue Squadron II, Battle of Hoth. John Zeepvat; 3:10

Super Monkey Ball, score on Advanced level. Steven Dunlop; 755,412

NEW CHALLENGE!

1080° Avalanche, Novice, Easy Life, Tenderfoot Pass. Dominic Wint; 0'57"82

Star Wars Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike, Raid at Bakura. Mark Puddifoot; 6:02

Soul Calibur II, quickest time on Arcade mode, Easy setting. John Zeepvat; 0'50"86

NEW CHALLENGE!

TG Rally (GBA), Time Attack, Alpine Vista, Stage 1. Kingsley; 2:00:20

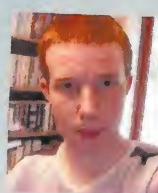
Pikmin, grow the most Pikmin, Challenge mode, Impact Site. Jamie Ward; 263

NEW CHALLENGE!

Pokémon Pinball (GBA), top score on the Ruby table. Tim Street; 14,220,500

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, Peach Beach, 3 laps. Steven Dunlop; 1:11:847

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, Waluigi Stadium, 3 laps: John Zeepvat; 1:48:009



F-ZERO GX

Name: John Zeepvat
Score: 0:40.295

Got some advice? John took time out from his busy schedule to tell us that "I used a custom vehicle, as light as I could make it with A, A, B stats and remembered the boost locations. The rest is down to skill". Thanks for clearing that up, John.



NEW CHALLENGE!



MARIO KART

Name: Richard Hedges
Score: 0:09:930

Tell us about it: Yes, it's another challenge set by one of you lot. Richard Hedges sent in his best Baby Park lap time for the rest of you to have a crack at – but with the simplicity of the course, this will be a close one...



SUPER MONKEY BALL

Name: Steven Dunlop
Score: 755,412
Tell us all: Just as Roberto

Buono was goading Mark Puddifoot into an almost-winning score, Steven Dunlop rolled in past both of them to pinch the monkey crown. "Don't fall off and take all the warps," he chatters.



MARIO KART

Name: John Zeepvat
Score: 1:48:009

Any info? With just a fraction of a second separating Zeepvat from Dunlop and Every, this challenge couldn't have been closer. Maybe John's uncanny resemblance to Waluigi himself tipped the scales of racing justice. Who knows...

What to do now...

If you've bettered one of the scores on our leader board we want to hear all about it – but you'll need to get some evidence of your score (a photo of your TV is best) and send it along to us if you want to get famous.

But that's not all – we want to find out where you did it, when you did it and how you did it. Make sure it's interesting, because if you've top-scored you'll be featured here, so you'll want to include a good quality photo of

yourself as well (if it's a digital pic, please provide a fairly hi-res version). And if you think there's a game that deserves to be in our list, just drop us a line at the usual address.

Send your top scores to The Great Nintendo Challenge, *Nintendo Official Magazine UK*, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 5UW or email them to kingsley.singleton@emap.com and he'll reply with a nice email telling you he's got your high score. From there it gets fed into *NOM UK*'s Mother Brain and churned out as the lovely pages you see before you. Well that's what Kingsley hopes, anyway.

We Can't Wait



NEW PICS!



For These...

MORE
NEXT
MONTH!



R: Racing Evolution

We were crossing every available body part in the hope that this hyper-realistic speedster from the *Ridge Racer* family would make an appearance in the UK and thanks to the never-ending pockets of über-publisher, EA, our joints haven't been knackered in vain. Featuring a gripping 14-chapter Story mode and a series of Event Challenges, as well as the usual Time Attack, Arcade and Multiplayer modes, the developers seem to be taking this away from the arcade-feeling *Ridge Racer* pedigree, opting for a more realistic driving experience. But that's fine by us. As long as it's fast, handles like a dream and looks the nuts we'll be as happy as a grease monkey in a bath of engine oil.



We Can't Wait For These...

James Bond 007 in... Everything or Nothing

Despite not being based on any of the actual movies, novels or comics, EA's *James Bond* franchise has managed to deliver two sterling efforts filled with the pistols, pizzazz and tongue-in-cheek humour that we've come to expect from Britain's greatest secret agent.

And the latest instalment, *Everything or Nothing*, promises to bring even more high-quality action, coupled with crazy driving sections just like those seen in the movies. But stop right there, Miss Moneypenny – this time there's a twist as Mr Bond will be appearing third person-style. What's more, the *Need for Speed* guys are working on the driving bits. Which we think is good by the way.



Pokémon Channel

While *Colosseum* allows 3D battling and *Pokémon Box* lets you put your Poké house in order, *Pokémon Channel* is another matter entirely. You play a Pokémon reporter, interacting and interviewing the critters, then sending a report back to the Pokémon Nice Network News department. Shopping channels, quiz shows and exercise classes are also included.



Killer 7

Capcom's intriguing split-personality-'em-up has now been confirmed for a July release in the US of A. That's good news as it means, barring some disastrous software-threatening event, *Killer 7* will be with us Europeans by the time the leaves start to fall from the trees. We've unearthed some new shots of the in-game action to feast your peepers on.





| Sabrewulf (GBA)

In the real world people don't smash up legendary Sabrewulf Amulets and release mythical beasts into the wild. That's what happens in games – specifically this Rare game where you play Sabre Man and control his menagerie of animals in an attempt to imprison the evil Wulf once more.



| PSO III C.A.R.D. Revolution

Another GameCube online game? So soon? You spoil us (sense the tone). Well it's not just about going online and battering some random Spaniard, this card-based battler gives the *Phantasy Star Online* environment a whole new tactical edge, akin to *FFTA* mixed with a twist of *Yu-Gi-Oh!* There's a vast array of weapons and items for you to get your greasy paws on in order to build your very own deck of justice.



We Can't Wait For These...



Mario Golf Advance Tour (GBA)

If this is half as good as the Game Boy Color version of *Mario Golf* then your GBA is in for 18 holes and a clubhouse worth of fun. *Advance Tour* is scheduled for a Spring release Stateside, meaning that it should be making an appearance in good old Blighty sometime this summer, just in time for you to link-up with *Toadstool Tour* on GameCube and unlock the juicy goodness that lies within.

The only reason we manage to drag ourselves away from *Toadstool Tour* is that we have to go home and sleep. Expect no such problems with this portable putter which could see you disconnect from reality altogether.



Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow

Opinion is divided in the NOM UK office. Tensions are high. Some say *Splinter Cell* is deep, real deep. Others argue that it's slow and boring. Whichever side of the fence you happen to silently fall on, Sam Fisher is making a comeback in the first half of next year to show the world that the Third Eschelon boys know how to get things done. Take a look at these new screens and then get some hide and seek practice in.





Kingdom Hearts

New screens filled with RPG goodness and Disney magic! Just look at them. But don't let Goofy fool you into thinking this is aimed at kids – it's being created by the wizards over at *Final Fantasy*'s Square Enix. The original was a massive hit on PS2 and there's no reason to believe that this'll be any less cool.



Terminator 3: Redemption

You know the Atari *Terminator 3* game that got canned on 'Cube? Yeah? Well this is different. Best of all, you get to 'be' Arnie's T-800 character and the game's set to feature not only the Governor's likeness, but also his vocal talents. Expect to be saying 'I'll be back' sometime next autumn.



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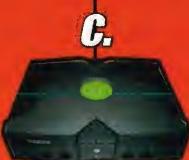


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b.



c.



d.



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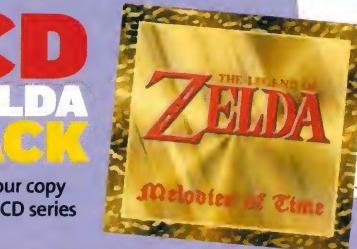


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Learn to draw

>> In issue 135 you showed those special Pokémon GBA SPs. Can I send my GBA somewhere to get the Groudon face sprayed on? Graeme Leitch, via email
We haven't heard anything about such a service as yet,

but if we do we'll be sure to let you know.

RUNNER-UP

This way for a mass debate, people

>> I think you should have a debate on who the coolest minor character in a video game is. I put forward the case for Makar the Korok from *The Wind Waker*. He just emanates coolness! What do you think?

Mad Rob, via email

Not a bad topic there, Mad Rob. We'll put forward a vote for Kururin's mum out of *kuru kuru kururin*.

Ball and chain

>> I'm the Chain Chomp's biggest fan. He/it's so cool! So I think you should do a Celebrate Nintendo article on the history of the Chain Chomp. Failing that, could you list every game the Chain

That's it

I'm sick and tired of Japan getting cool stuff before us. I'm not talking about games, although I'm gutted about *Animal Crossing*, I'm talking about all the cool stuff you tease us with in your Big in Japan pages. Just look at that Stars catalogue from last issue, that's too much good stuff for one country to handle. Come on Japan, share the wealth with the wider world.

Connor McIntosh,
Dundee

We have nothing to say in Japan's defence. You're pretty spot on with those comments. And the Famicom alarm clock is the last straw for us.

LETTER
OF THE
MONTH



The Things You Send Special

Take a look at this bumper haul of forgotten Nintendo gumph.



1. Frances Hannon of Fordingbridge sent in this nifty *Captain N* video, featuring the *Legend of Zelda*. Ta very much, Frances.

2. Two retro Nintendo pin badges found their way to NOM UK's office via Edward Stuart of Fleet.

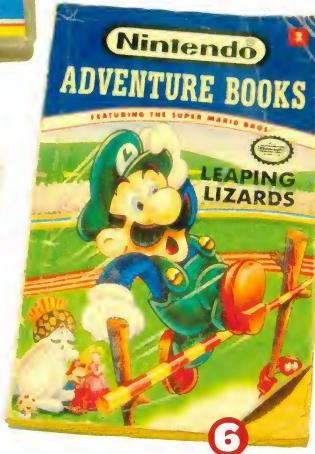
3. It looks like Kirby, but the box says otherwise. Hmm, there may be some copyright issues with 'Chuck'. Thanks all the same go to David Wilson of Freckleton.

4. All the way from Greece comes this Nintendo Ladder Game. Thank you Sarah Baxter, wherever you come from.

5. This cool Super Mario Bros. egg cup came courtesy of eagle-eyed Max Worthington from Gloucestershire.

6. This one's like a *Choose Your Own Adventure* book, but with Nintendo characters! Cheers to William Fisher of Ripley for this little gem.

7. Alex Larkman from Hessle must have cleared out his loft to find two Nintendo vids and five figures. Scorebag, Alex.



From the **NOM UK** forums...

Uncensored comment and opinion from Nintendoids like you >>

■ Nintendo Smintendo!

Billyham

Are there ever any gaming championship type things where gamers can compete, as i'm a Gaming Ninja Jedi I think i would do pretty well.

P.S. Hopefully championships in the U.K., i'm not going to the states just to thrash someone at double dash!!

Curze

A 'Gaming Ninja Jedi'... Right...

Ady_M

A 'Gaming Ninja Jedi'????? What, do you dress up in black clothing and use the force to play the game. Anyway... No one can beat me at DD, not even Gaming Ninj... nevermind.

Curze

You can't possibly believe that can you!?

Cheungs7

As long as in the Championships there's SNK Vs Capcom, then I'm game. If you're the Jedi Ninja then I'm then "Super Duper, Jedi Master Golden Cosmos Barbarian Warrior Wizard Super Saiyan (Level 4) Ice-man Cool Hulk (don't make me angry) Ninja Dwarf Black Belt Sensei".

SIRCJH

'Gaming Ninja Jedi'? You don't sound so tuff... Maybe NOM could host a 'gaming uk championship' or a MKDD championship?

■ Reviews

Sir_Matty

Why can't NOM post reviews on the website b4 the magazine comes out? I've been waiting 4 the True Crime review 4 A-G-E-S now, and I'd have liked 2 c it early, on the website, b4 the issue with the review in it was out. However, i can understand if this is due 2 finance reasons; ppl could just go on the site 2 save money 2 buy the magazine. But is this the real reason?! If not, NOM may u please please put reviews on the site so we don't have 2 wait 4 the magazine 2 come out:D:D:D.

antsteruk

So let me get this straight... you'd rather not pay to see what these people are paid to do, with money coming from your pockets? Geez...

SIRCJH

NOM is the only thing i read except from school work etc. Why go on the net and pay more money?

Billyham

Nintendo Official Magazine, I used to be a

playstation man but i converted to nintendo which was a good choice. I get Ninty every month but i'm not subscribed. I read most of the news off nintendo-europe, but the mag is definately worth it. Working at nintendo must be the coolest job ever.

Sir_Matty

No, I buy NOM every month as well, I converted from PlayStation about 2 years ago, and I love NOM - I'd just like 2 c reviews of a game I'm considering 2 buy b4 it hits the shops!!! NOM ROCKS!!!

994wemj

well I don't think that this is a very good idea. People will stop buying the mag and so the mag will run out of money and we wont have no mag or website then. I would suggest however that a subscribers area is added where exclusive content is kept for a month only for people who have subscribed and therefore already paid for the mag. That way NOM aren't going to lose any money because all the people that will be seeing it for free on the site are those who have already paid for the issue in which the review is going to be put into.

I can honestly say I am never expecting to see this happen because well, they've used another site already and so obviously haven't got the expertise recruited to do such an area. I'm 16 and I can do it, lol, so maybe, just maybe it might be a reality one day.

■ What's your combo

Billyham

What's your combo on Double dash? Mine is Toad and Paratroopa in Toads' Kart.

SIRCJH

Mine's Mario and Wario with Wario kart.

Nintendo_Guru

Mine's generally the two Toads or Toad and Paratrooper in Toad's kart.

Ady_M

I play co-op with my brother. I am Baby Bowser and he is Waluigi, and we drive in Waluigi's brilliant purple scrambler. The bombs are the best weapon.

Yoshi_mitsu87

my combo is toad and baby mario so i can use the gold mushroom and the chain chomp weapons.

Curze

Bowser and Paratroopa in the Parade Kart.

Oil! Why not chat to other Nintendoids on the forums at www.nintendomagazine.co.uk

Chomp's ever been in?
James Drayton, via email
Maybe you're right. The Chain Chomp did win the Hardest Nintendo Character competition, so by rights he should have some sort of reward, don't you think?

RUNNER-UP

Gone

>>I can't believe how quickly the Zelda bonus disc disappeared from Nintendo Europe's website. It seemed like a couple of hours and it was all sold out. Surely Nintendo anticipated this sort of demand. They should have put more up there. Loads of Nintendo fans, myself included, are now disappointed at the fact that we'll never play Majora's Mask on GameCube.

Harry Joseph, Leicester
Even we were staggered at the rate those discs went. But it kind of devalues a Limited Edition if there are thousands and thousands of them about, although we do sympathise with those of you who weren't quick enough.

RUNNER-UP

The green lump gets it

>>Finally you're giving me a free punch bag. My dream of killing Bowser with an overly large piece of fruit will become reality. I've never been so happy!

Anonymous Joe, via email

Stay away

>>I have two games shops near my house. The problem is they have no GameCube games in them whatsoever. It is so annoying the way I have to travel a long distance every time I want a game. I only get a new game on birthdays and at Christmas. So don't go to Carrickmacross looking for GameCube games, because you won't find any.

Fergal Boylan, Carrickmacross
That sounds like the worst place in the world. Thanks for the advice.

RUNNER-UP

Where have all the monkeys Gon Gon?

>>Have you heard anything about another Super Monkey Ball game? In an age of games where it seems that sequels are all the rage, why has Sega not seen fit to mention

MORE LETTERS



Text the Editor

No internet? No pen? Speak here... >>



You can let us know how you feel about the world of Nintendo on a text!

Tap in 'Txt', leave a space, add your message and send it to 84070. You must get permission from the bill payer before texting us as each text costs 25p to send. Every text sent to us can be viewed online at www.clubnom.com and here's just a small selection of your ramblings:

*I ate 20P to play for 10 minutes on SC2.

*can i have a famicom calendar? Please Please Please Please Please Please Please Please?

*I'm a mad RPG fan and i think that tales of symphonia SHOULD come out over here! (the one on the SNES was a classic) COME ON NAMCO!!

*i think you should make a sonic music cd next with the main themes for the Gamecube as they rule. from Hezza

*we need a new zelda tv series based on ocarina of time. Talk to your people

*We need a game wit a light gun! Get capcom to make a new time crisis. Please?

*ive just finished Pokemon ruby i realy enjoyed it the graphics r cool 4 a Gameboy and look forward to the next 1

*i think there should be a review on tv adapters and all add-ons for GBA and SP in Nom

*I was surprised in da nov ish 2 c my friend Maiko in BIG IN JAPAN! she got in d mag b4 me!

anything about this nugget of genius? It's such a simple concept and yet it's one of the most addictive and challenging titles I've ever played. Please Sega, please make another one.

Bruce Conway, Surrey

We reckon a third instalment's a cert, but it's going to need something different to keep it fresh. Those new mini-games in *Super Monkey Ball 2* weren't up to much.

All clear

>>Right. I have asked this damn question three times now and I want to know the answer. Can you read? Yes? Oh, just making sure before I ask this question for the fourth time. Does the e-Reader work on the Game Boy Player? Please print this letter because I really want to know.

Kieran Hubbard,
Shepton Mallet

Your cheap attempts at sarcasm don't wash with us, Hubbard. We know you love us really. And yes, an e-Reader will work on a GB Player. We tried it out in the office, just for you. Be grateful!

RUNNER-UP

Greedy boy

>>Going back to the poll result for "I'm getting all the right signals" in issue 135. I think the people who said the GameCube price drop was sending out the wrong messages have been dropped on their heads as babies – it was a very good move by Nintendo. So good I might get another GameCube.

Stephen Williams, Yeovil
Surely one GC is enough, although Dean's got four!

Gutted

>>You must have made that *Falsebound Kingdom* preview up out of your stupid heads. I can't believe that something associated with Yu-Gi-Oh! could be that bad. It's Yu-Gi-Oh!, it's in 3D and it's got all new story lines – stuff we've never seen before. Surely it's what every fan has been waiting their whole life for.

Daniel Cousins, Portsmouth

You believe what you want, we know that *The Falsebound Kingdom* is a massive disappointment, whether you like Yu-Gi-Oh! or not.

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Zelda: Wind Waker



#2 Super Mario Kart

Once NOM's *Pokémon* whipping boy, Tim started as a Staff Writer in 1997. Since then he's occupied various chairs around the NOM office, including Senior Writer and Deputy Editor, before becoming Editor in May 2001. Before NOM, Tim studied at the Darlington School of Journalism.



"*Super Mario Kart* is the best multiplayer game ever. Forget *GoldenEye*, forget *ISS* and you can stick your *Mario Parties*. *Double Dash* comes close, but the original is the greatest-ever Nintendo game.

It's simple. That's the whole point with *Super Mario Kart*. You get ingenious track layouts, awesome weapons and all you've gotta do is get to that line first. It's simplicity that makes this game rule.

With Mode 7 working its ass off and the bloody blocks on Vanilla Lake doing your head in, at least

you've got the Red Shell. The weapon of kings; no blood, no guts flying everywhere, just good old-fashioned pull-the-trigger-and-watch-that-bad-boy-fly-right-up-their-jacksy fun.

Then there's Battle mode. Four mazes, the first one's the best and only the big man upstairs knows how many times I've played it. You see, there's no hiding, it's who dares wins all the way to the final balloon burst and when you get a Green Shell lined up perfectly you'll feel on top of the world."



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x 07

x 3

2 00' 07" 43

x 3
x 06

x 3

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- *Astro Boy*: first review of a future GBA star

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Max Payne 2*
Medal of Honor: R. Sun*
Prince of Persia: S. of Time*
Project Gotham Racing 2*
Project Zero
Rainbow Six 3
Return of the King
Simpsons: Hit & Run
Splinter Cell
SSX 3
Star Wars: Jedi Academy*
Star Wars: Knights Old Rep.
SWAT: Global Strike Team*
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The Treasury of Isengard*
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Ace Combat: Distant Thund.
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BMX XXX
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Burnout 2 Point of Impact
Colin McRae Rally 4
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Crash Boat: Wr. of Cortex
Crash Nitro Kart*
Dark Cloud 2
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2*
Dragonball Z: Budokai
Driver 3*
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Escape from Monkey Island
FIFA 2004
Final Fantasy 10
Fire Warrior
Freedom Fighters
Getaway
Gran Turismo 3
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: V. City
Harry Potter & Ch. of Secrets
Headhunter
Indiana Jones: Emp's Tomb
Jak 2: Renegade
Judge Dredd:Dredd v Death
Lord of the Rings: R.oF King
Manhunt*
Metal of Honor Frontline
Metal of Honor: R. Sun
Metal Gear Solid 2
Midnight Club 2
Need for Speed Undergr.*
Primal
Prince of Persia: S. of Time*
Pro Evolution Soccer 3
Ratchet and Clank
Ratchet and Clank 2
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Return of the King
Silent Hill 2
Silent Hill 3
Simpsons: Hit & Run
Smackdown! 5: H.C.T.Pain
SOCOM: US Navy Seals
Splinter Cell
SSX 3
Star Trek: Elite Force
The Getaway
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Leg. of Zelda: Link to Past
Lord of the Rings: R.oF King
Mario Kart Super Circuit
Pokemon Pinball: Ruby & S.
Pokemon Ruby
Pokemon Sapphire
Ruby & Sapphire (P. Pinball)
Ruby Pokemon
Sapphire & Ruby (P. Pinball)
Sapphire Pokemon
Sonic Advance
Sonic Advance 2
Star Wars: Att. of Clones
Super Bust A Move
Super Mario Advance 2
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Plus Many More...

GAME CUBE

A = 0 1
A Goddess Reborn
Ace Golf
Agent Under Fire
Aggressive Inline
American Pro Trucker
Animal Crossing
Aquaman: Battle for Atlantis
ATV Quad Racing 2
B = 0 2
Back to Baghdad
Baldr's Gate: Dark Alliance
Barbarian
Batman: Dark Tomorrow
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu*
Battle for Atlantis
Battle Houshin
Battle, Sonic Adventure 2
Battlecry, Robotech
Beach Bandits Rocket Power
Beach Spikers
Big Air Freestyle
Big Mutha Truckers
Billy Hatcher and Giant Egg
Black and Bruised
Blood Omen 2
BloodRayne
BMX XXX
Bomberman Generation
Bond 007: Agent Under Fire
Bond 007: Nightfire
Bounty Hunter, Star Wars
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Bulletproof Monk*
Burnout
Burnout 2 Point of Impact
Bust a Move 2
C = 0 3
Capcom vs. SNK: EO
Casper: Spirit Dimensions
Cel Damage
Celebrity Deathmatch
Chamber of Secrets
Chaos Bleeds
Clone Wars, Star Wars
Combat Zones, Top Gun
Conflict: Desert Storm
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Crash Bandicoot
Crash Nitro Kart*
Crush Hour, WWE
D = 0 4
Dakar 2
Dark Alliance, Baldr's Gate
Dark Legacy
Dark Tomorrow, Batman
Darkened Skye
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2
Dead to Rights
Deadly Alliance
Def Jam Vendetta
Defender
Desert Storm 1 & 2
Destroy All Monsters
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dinosaur Planet
Disney Sports Football
Disney's Magical Mirror
Donald Duck: Quack Attack
Doshin the Giant
Double Dash, Mario Kart
Dr. Muto
Dredd vs Death
Driven
E = 0 5
Ego Mania
Eighteen Wheeler
End Game
Enter the Dragonfly
Enter the Matrix
ESPN Int. Winter Sports '02
Eternal Darkness

F = 0 6
Evolution Skateboarding
Extra Large, Shrek
F1 = 0 2
Fantasy Star Online 1 & 2
Fellowship of the Ring
FIFA 2002
FIFA 2003
FIFA 2004
FIFA World Cup 2002
Fighting Live
Finding Nemo
Fire Blade
Fox McCloud in StarFox Adv.
Freaky Flyers
Freedom Fighters
Freestyle, Tarzan
Frontline, Medal of Honor
F-Zero GX
G = 0 7
Ghost Recon
Gladius*
Goddess Reborn
Godzilla: Destroy all Monst.
Grand Heat, Burnout
Groove Adventure Race
H = 0 8
Harry Potter & Ch. of Secrets
Hit & Run, The Simpsons
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hoodlum Havoc
Hot Pursuit 2
Hot Wheels: Velocity X
Hulk
Hunter: The Reckoning
I = 0 9
Ikaru
Incredible Hulk
Inter. Superstar Soccer 2&3
Inter. Winter Sports 2002
Italian Job: L.A. Heist
J = 1 0
James Bond 007: Nightfire
James Bond: Agent Under F.
Jedi Knight 2: Jedi Outcast
Jeremy McGrath's Scross W.
Crash Bandicoot
Crash Nitro Kart*
Crush Hour, WWE
K = 1 1
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer
Kinnuku Man 2-Yo
L = 1 2
L.A. Heist, The Italian Job
Leg. of Kain: Blood Omen
Leg. of Zelda: Master Quest
Leg. of Zelda: Ocarina of T.
Leg. of Zelda: Wind Waker
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2
Legends of Wrestling
Legends of Wrestling 2
Lord of the Rings: F. of Ring
Lord of the Rings: R. of King
Lord of the Rings: T. Towers
Lost Kingdoms
Lost Kingdoms II: Rune
Luigi's Mansion
M = 1 3
Madden NFL 2002& 2004
Magical Mirror
Donald Duck: Quack Attack
Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour
Mario Kart: Double Dash
Mario Party 4
Mario Sunshine
Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX 2
Matrix, Enter the
Medal of Honor Frontline
M = 1 4
Medal of Honor: R. Sun*
Mega Man Network Tran.
Men in Black 2 Alien Escape
Metroid Prime
Micro Machines
Minority Report
Monsters Inc. Scream Arena SSX 3

N = 1 4
NASCAR Thunder 03&04
NBA 2K3
NBA Live 2003
NBA Street Volume 2
NFL Blitz 2002
NFL Quarterback Club 02
NHL 2003 & 2004
NHL Hit 2002
Night of 100 Frights
Nightfire
O = 1 5
Ocarina of Time: Master
Ocarina of Time: Zelda
OO Agent Under Fire
OO 7 Nightfire
Outlaw Golf
P = 1 6
PN 03
Paris-Dakar Rally 2
PGA Tour 2004
Phantasy Star Online
Pikmin
Point of Impact
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Prince of Persia: S. of Time*
Q = 1 7
Quack Attack
Quad Power Racing 2
R = 1 8
Rayman 3
Rebel Strike, R. Squadron 3
Reckless: Yakuza Missions
Red Card Soccer 2003
Rocky
Rogue Leader
Rune: Lost Kingdoms 1 & 2
S = 1 9
Sanity's Requiem
Scooby Doo: Night of 100 F.
Scorpion King
Scream Arena, Monsters Inc.
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Simpsons: Hit & Run
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T = 2 0
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U = 2 1
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V = 2 2
Velocity X, Hot Wheels
Vendetta, Die Hard
Rising Sun, Medal of Honor*
Viewtiful Joe
Virtua Striker 3: v2002
W = 2 3
Wario World
Warzone, Smuggler's Run
Wind Waker
Wolverine's Revenge
Wreckless: Yakuza Mission
WWE Crush Hour
WWE Wrestlemania X8
WWE Wrestlemania XIX
X = 2 4
XGRA*
XIII (Thirteen)*
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.
X-Men: Next Dimension
Z = 2 6
Zapper
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